SUNDAY
March 22, 2026

BENGALURU
CITY EDITION
28 Pages ₹ 8.00

THE HINDU ON SUNDAY
INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

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Vol. 57 • No. 12
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World Oral Health Day
20 March

SENSODYNE

ARE YOUR TEETH AGEING FASTER THAN YOU ARE?

5 signs your teeth could be ageing faster

FLIP TO KNOW YOUR DENTAL AGE

J BG-BGE

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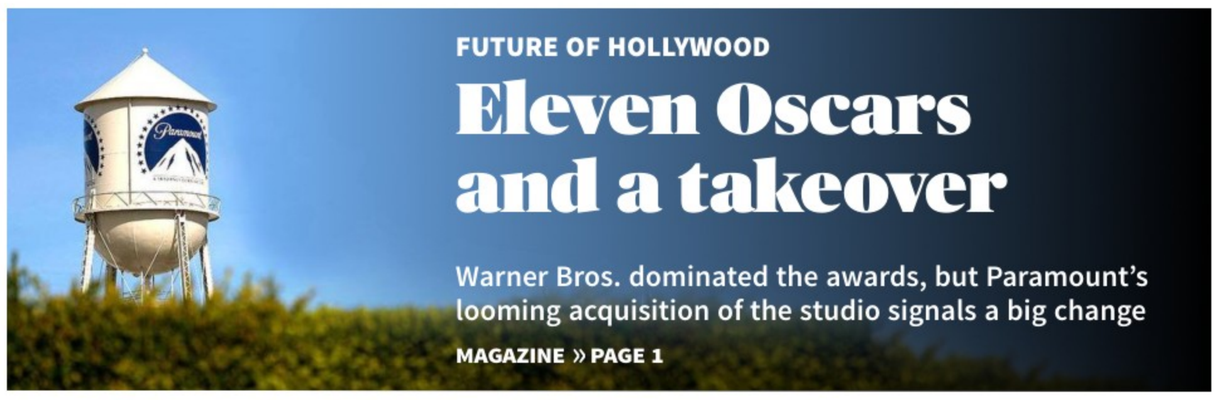

FUTURE OF HOLLYWOOD

Eleven Oscars and a takeover

Warner Bros. dominated the awards, but Paramount's looming acquisition of the studio signals a big change

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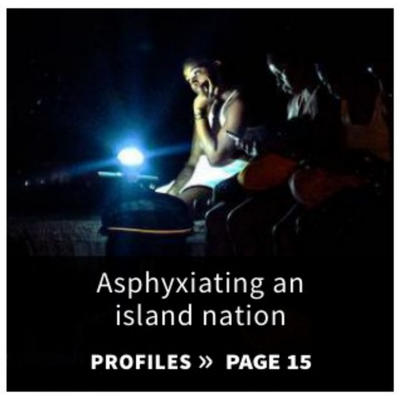
Why do electric vehicle batteries catch fire?

FAQ » PAGE 14



Asphyxiating an island nation

PROFILES » PAGE 15

Yashaswini, Manav win maiden National titles

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NEARBY

'No exemption for women teachers over 50 from SIR'

BENGALURU
The Revenue Department has refused a blanket exemption for women teachers aged above 50 from the upcoming Special Intensive Revision (SIR) and National Census-2027 in Karnataka. » PAGE 2

West Asia crisis: Yarn, logistics costs surge

BENGALURU
Production costs in the textile industry have risen sharply, driven by increases across key inputs, from yarn and dyes to processing charges, amid West Asia tensions. » PAGE 4

CLASSIFIEDS » PAGES 4 & 6
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Trump mulls ending war; U.S. eases curbs on Iran oil

U.S. President says securing the Strait of Hormuz is the responsibility of other nations; he adds U.S. is very close to meeting its objectives; however, Tehran claims to have attacked 2 American bases

Stanly Johny

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Saturday that he is considering "winding down" the war on Iran, adding that securing the Strait of Hormuz – now under Iran's control – is the responsibility of other nations, even as Washington temporarily eased sanctions on Iranian oil shipments in a bid to alleviate the global supply crisis.

"We are getting very close to meeting our objectives," the U.S. President wrote in a post on a social media platform.

Mr. Trump also said that the U.S. has "degraded" Iran's missile capability, "destroyed" its defence industrial base, and "eliminated" its Navy and Air Force, including anti-aircraft weaponry. The U.S. President vowed to protect America's allies in the region, "including Israel, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, and others", adding that the U.S. had taken out Iran's nuclear capability, and would never allow Tehran to rebuild it.

The U.S. Treasury Department on Friday said it was temporarily lifting sanctions on Iranian oil already loaded onto vessels, to tackle supply disruptions and rising prices.

Meanwhile, on Saturday evening, Alireza Tangsiri, commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Navy said the Guards had attacked two American bases in the Persian Gulf.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 9
RELATED REPORTS ON
» PAGES 15 AND 16

Big hit: Members of a Red Crescent rescue team working at a building that was damaged by a strike in Tehran. REUTERS

Centre increases commercial LPG allocation to 50%

NEW DELHI
Offering respite to commercial establishments, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has permitted to allocate an additional 20% of commercial LPG to States. This will take the overall allocation of the commercial cooking gas allocated to States, from two previous and the latest directives, to 50%. » PAGE 9

PM speaks with Iran President, pushes for secure shipping lanes

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday spoke with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on the occasion of Id and the Persian new year Nowruz and urged for "freedom of navigation", indicating India's concern over disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz.

Mr. Pezeshkian referred to the India presidency in the BRICS grouping and said it should play an "independent role" in bringing the attacks by the U.S. and Israel to a "halt".

He said the "prerequisite" to bringing the war to an end is the "immediate cessation of aggressions by the U.S. and Israel". Soon after this, External Affairs Minister Jaishankar spoke with his Iranian counterpart Seyed Abbas Araghchi and discussed the evolving conflict and the "implications for the larger region".

"Spoke with President Pezeshkian... Condemned attacks on critical infrastructure in the region, which threaten regional stability and disrupt global supply chains. Reiterated the importance of safeguarding freedom of navigation and ensuring that shipping lanes remain open and secure," said Mr. Modi in a X post.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 9

Did govt. take any major diplomatic initiatives: Cong.

NEW DELHI
The Congress on Saturday slammed the Centre for its failure to condemn the U.S.-Israel strikes on Iran. The party asked whether the the government had undertaken any significant diplomatic initiatives to de-escalate the situation or to push for a ceasefire. » PAGE 9

OTS scheme on water bills from April

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A one-time settlement (OTS) scheme, waiving 100% interest on pending water bills, was announced by the Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru incharge Minister D.K. Shivakumar here on Saturday.

The OTS will be operational for three months from April to June.

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) initiative, rolled out as an "Ugadi gift", aims to help consumers clear their long-pending dues by paying only the principal amount.

The interest accrued until April 2026 will be fully waived as a rebate during the scheme period, sources said.

According to official data, of the nearly 11 lakh water connections in the city, about 5.11 lakh have outstanding dues.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 3

On a book run: Women with a pile of much-loved books walk through the village of Aragam in northern Kashmir.

Along the lane: Aragam, in Bandipora district, is about 65 km from Srinagar.

Village of words: Kashmir's book village is known for its network of community libraries.

Stories in hand: Reading spaces have become a part of daily life in the village.

Sanctuary of stories

A quiet Kashmir hamlet turns its homes into libraries, welcoming readers from near and far; the village writes its future through pages, people, and shared spaces

Imran Nissar
imran.nissar@thehindu.co.in

In the foothills of the Himalayas in Bandipora in northern Kashmir lies a small village of a few hundred households. This hamlet, Aragam, is now also known as book village. It has a network of libraries through which the community here is positioning itself as a tourist attraction.

Book cafes carved out in the old timber-framed houses has become the new signature of this village. While there is a central library, small libraries have been set up in over a dozen houses. They not only help local children engage with the written word organically and independently but have also turned into a creative learning space for visitors.

At any given time, a teenager can be seen buried in a book, be it of classical poetry or a suspenseful thriller.

The village has become a sanctuary for the curious. The walls of the houses are painted with vibrant murals, and the shelves of wood and stone make the act of reading feel warm and special in the ambience of mountains.

Children act as impromptu guides in Aragam and books as icebreakers; the real story is the hospitality of a people who have decided that their legacy will be written in ink and memory.

Quiet corner: Students read inside a school library, one of several learning spaces set up across the village.

World Oral Health Day
20 March

SENSODYNE

CHECK YOUR DENTAL AGE TODAY!

For World Oral Health Day,

SENSODYNE partnered with ida Indian Dental Association

to help you discover your dental age

and start your journey to better oral health.

Scan below to get your
personalised dental age report

Take the first steps
for better oral health today

Visit your
dentist every
6 months

Brush
gently using
a soft-bristled
toothbrush

Use
a specialised
toothpaste
for sensitivity

Protect enamel
daily with an
enamel-care
toothpaste

In service of your oral health

SENSODYNE | SENSODYNE PRONAMEL | parodontax THE GUM EXPERTS

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Swift police action saves man whose throat was slit in attack

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 38-year-old man who was brutally assaulted by an unidentified attacker in Kamakshipalya, west Bengaluru, was rescued in time by the city police in the early hours of Friday.

The incident occurred around 7.10 a.m. near a petrol bunk in Vinayaka Nagar, which is under the jurisdiction of the Kamakshipalya Police Station.

The victim, who works at a granite company, was returning home after finishing his shift when an unknown assailant allegedly slit his throat with a knife and fled the spot.

Alert residents

Alert local residents immediately contacted the emergency helpline Namma 112.

The call was relayed to the Hoysala patrol unit and police personnel at around 7.15 a.m.

Assistant Sub-Inspector Kemparaju and Police Constable Harish Kumar reached the spot within minutes and shifted the critically injured man to a nursing home in Sunkadakatte for emergency treatment.

Police officials said the victim survived owing to the timely intervention and quick response by the patrol team.

Yet to be traced

Further investigation is under way to trace the unidentified attacker.

'No blanket exemption for women teachers above 50 from SIR and census duty'

The decision has left teachers sore; one educator says that teachers will meet School Education and Literacy Minister Madhu Bangarappa and put forward their pleas

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

The Department of School Education and Literacy had submitted a proposal seeking to exempt women teachers above the age of 50 from SIR and census duties. FILE PHOTO

The Revenue Department has refused a blanket exemption for women teachers aged above 50 from the upcoming Special Intensive Revision (SIR) and National Census-2027 in the State.

Following a representation from teachers' associations, the Department of School Education and Literacy (DSEL) had submitted a proposal seeking to exempt women teachers above 50 from SIR and census duties.

Responding to this proposal in a letter, Munish Moudgil, Principal Secretary, Revenue Department, said while Deputy Commissioners and Municipal Commissioners in the districts were free to take a decision on this, and depending on the available resources, such requests cannot be considered if it were to affect the conduct of SIR and the census. He also asked them to submit the decision taken in this regard to the government.

A copy of the letter is available with *The Hindu*.

In his letter, Mr. Moudgil further said that Deputy Commissioners and Municipal Commissioners had already begun preparations for the conduct of the National Census, and the Election Commission of India is expected to begin the SIR exercise in the State. In such a scenario, Booth Level Officers (BLOs) may have to be exempted from the census exercise, indicating a crunch in human resources.

Teachers are always tasked with non-teaching tasks like election work and census, says Government Primary School Teachers' Association president

However, this response from the Revenue Department has left women teachers above 50 years sore.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, a senior woman teacher of a government school in Bengaluru said that many teachers died during the SIR exercise in other States and it is a big concern.

"They have decided to carry out both the census and SIR during the scorching summer. It will definitely take a toll. Many teachers above 50 years are already suffering from serious health issues. By the time the SIR and census are completed, schools will reopen, which means there will be no rest," she said, adding that teachers will meet School Education and Literacy Minister Madhu Bangarappa and seek a blanket exemption again. Chandrashekara Nuggali, president, Government Primary School Teachers' Association, said that teachers were always tasked with all kinds of non-teaching tasks like election work, census, and so on. There are enough 'C' group employees in various government departments who can be roped in for the same, he suggested. He said the association will meet Mr. Moudgil to push him to reconsider the directions to district authorities.

High-end car performs 'spinning' stunt at Anil Kumble Circle, driver booked

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Cubbon Park Traffic Police have registered a case against a Lamborghini driver after a video of him performing dangerous stunts at Anil Kumble Circle on M.G. Road went viral on social media.

Police sources said the incident unfolded between 2 a.m. and 3 a.m. on Saturday, even as patrolling vehicles were nearby. In the video, a white Lamborghini car is seen arriving at Anil Kumble Circle, performing a stunt and subsequently doing 'donuts', i.e. circling, at the junction.

The high-end car then proceeds towards Tonique Circle, makes a U-turn, and heads towards Trinity Junction, according to police sources. The incident came to light after an onlooker filmed the act and shared the footage on social media platforms. Several users reshared the video, demanding police action. A senior police officer told *The Hindu* that a *suo motu* case was registered soon after the incident came to light and that a search operation has been launched to trace the vehicle.

The Cubbon Park police have booked an FIR under Section 281 of BNS, 2023, which deals with rash and negligent driving on public roads that endangers human life or safety. They have also invoked Section 184 of the Indian Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, which covers dangerous driving, including speeding, jumping red lights, using handheld devices, and unlawful overtaking.

The incident has raised road safety concerns given the busy nature of the junction, located in the Central Business District. However, no accidents were reported. The police said they have been maintaining vigilance over such incidents and have taken strict action against drivers in the past as well.

The incident comes a day after Home Minister G. Parameshwara noted that the Bengaluru Police have been taking strict action against stunt performers. He has, on multiple occasions, condemned such stunts on public roads and has stated that the government will not tolerate such actions.

Three-year-old mowed down by truck

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A three-year-old girl was mowed down by a container truck near Hanumanthegowdanapalya on the northwestern outskirts of Bengaluru on Saturday while she was walking to a nearby temple with her mother.

According to the police, the impact of the accident was so severe that the girl's head was crushed and she died on the spot. Her mother, Lavanya, who was carrying an 11-month-old baby on her hip, had a narrow escape, the police said.

The deceased girl has been identified as Nischitha L.N. Gowda. The incident occurred around 11.15 a.m. on Saturday in a village near Madanayakanahalli.

The police have arrested the driver, Murthy, and have launched an investigation into the case.

According to the police, the girl, her mother, and her 11-month-old brother were on their way to the Muneshwara Temple. The mother was carrying the baby on her left hip while holding Nischitha's hand, and they were walking along the left side of the road.

The speeding truck struck the girl from the front, killing her on the spot, a police officer said. Passersby stopped the truck and pulled the driver out. Enraged villagers broke the truck's windshield and later handed the accused over to the police.

Based on a complaint filed by Nischitha's grandmother, the Madanayakanahalli Police have filed an FIR against the truck driver under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Sections 281, which deals with rash or negligent driving in a public place endangering human life or safety, and 106 (1), which deals with death due to negligence.

"We are verifying the driver's details and the vehicle documents," an investigator said.

Application submission for MBA, MCA begins tomorrow

BENGALURU: Applications have been invited for admission to MBA, MCA, ME, M.Tech, and M.Arch courses (PGCET-2026) and applications should be submitted online between March 23 and April 8, stated H. Prasanna, the executive director of Karnataka Examinations Authority.

The last date for payment of fees is April 10, he stated.

The written examination for various courses will be conducted on May 23 and 24, he said in a statement.

Vendors' group calls street vending ban 'anti-poor', seeks rollback

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The association argued that the move seeks to exclude street vendors from public spaces. FILE PHOTO

The Karnataka Pragathi Para Beedhi Vyaparigala Sangha has opposed the proposed policy by the State government and the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) to ban street vending on arterial and sub-arterial roads in the city, terming it illegal, unconstitutional, and detrimental to the livelihoods of the urban poor. The association warned that protests would begin if the proposal is not withdrawn.

This comes a day after Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, during a pre-GBA Budget meeting on Friday, said a footpath policy will be introduced. As part of the policy, street vendors are expected to be barred from doing commercial activities on arterial and sub-arterial roads.

The association argued that the move seeks to exclude street vendors from public spaces.

Citing the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, it said the law recognises street vending as a "legitimate" livelihood. However, even a decade after its enactment, the government has not completed vendor surveys or issued identity cards to all eligible vendors, leaving many without formal recognition, it said, adding that a blanket ban on vending based on road categories would be contrary to the Act, which allows vending in public spaces and requires Town Vending Committees (TVCs) to decide vending and no-vending zones.

Rejecting the claim that vendors obstruct pedestrian movement, the group attributed congestion to other factors, including the expansion of roads for private vehicles, encroachments by commercial establishments, illegal parking, construction debris, and infrastructure installations on footpaths.

The association also opposed proposals to relocate vendors to designated zones away from main roads, stating that such measures would cut them off from customer flow and reduce incomes. It said similar models have failed elsewhere and have raised concerns over the rules requiring vendors to remove carts from the streets at night, saying these would affect elderly vendors and those living in small, rented homes without storage space. The association further criticised any move to restrict vending only to those holding identity cards, noting that many eligible vendors have not yet received them owing to administrative delays. It said such measures would unfairly render vulnerable vendors "illegal".

The group has demanded that any proposal to ban street vending on arterial and sub-arterial roads be immediately withdrawn. It also called for the full implementation of the Street Vendors Act, including a survey and issuance of identity cards, and the constitution of Town Vending Committees with proper vendor representation.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This notice is issued on behalf of my client Sri.Gali Kamakshaiah to bring to the notice of the general public that the Original Allotment letter dated 30.01.1989 & Original Possession Certificate dated 10.02.1995 in respect of Site No.115, situated at Hosur, Sarjapura Road layout Sector-VII the above mentioned Original Allotment Letter & Original Possession Certificate has been lost at the time of travelling. All the persons are hereby informed not to deal or carry out any transaction with anyone on the basis of the said Original Allotment letter & Original Possession Certificate. If anyone has already carried out or being carried out kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 7 days from this present along with that Police Complaint is also given vide Lost Report No.2118590/2026, dated 21.03.2026.

Y. Sowmya Yadav, Advocate
Samvruddhi Legal, # 83, Ground Floor, 5th 'A' Cross, 21st Main, J.P. Nagar 2nd Phase, Bangalore-78. **M : 9916343921**

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the General Public that, my Client - **Sri. K Premnath**, Residing at No. 41, 9th Cross, Mookambika Temple Road, Hosakerehalli, BSK 3rd Stage, Bengaluru–560 085, intend to purchase the Item No. 01 & 02 schedule property which is mentioned hereunder, from the present owner **Smt. Vishalakshi M**, W/o. Sri. S Krishna, Aged about 51 Years, Residing at No. 18, Gurusri Nilaya, 4th Cross, Near Galianjaneya Temple, Mysore Road, Byatarayanapura, Bengaluru – 560 026. The Item No. 01 Schedule Property is Purchased through a Registered Sale Deed dated 17/02/2025, vide Document No. KNK-1-15601-2024-25, SRO, Kanakapura, executed by M R Sujatha. The Item No. 02 Schedule Property is Purchased through a Registered Sale Deed dated 17/02/2025, vide Document No. KNK-1-15602-2024-25, SRO, Kanakapura, executed by M R Sujatha.

If any person, any Financial Institutions, Nationalized Banks, Co-Operative Banks have any claim in any manner or objections in respect of the Item No. 01 & 02 Schedule property Such as Sale Agreement, easement, possession, Mortgage, Gift, Lispendance or such other nature of Claim shall make representation in writing with all supporting original documents within **10 days** from today to the under signed in person.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY
ITEM NO. 01

All that piece and parcel of the land bearing Deshuvalli Village Sy. No. 10/2 measuring Acre-0-39.08-Guntas, Situated at Deshuvalli Village, Sathanur Hobli, Kanakapura Taluk, Ramanagara District, and bounded on:- East by: Land in Sy. No. 10/3 & 10/1 and 30 Feet Road, West by: Land in Sy. No. 9/1, 9/2A, 9/2B, 9/3, North by: Land in Sy. No. 11/2, South by: Halla and Land in Sy. No. 16/1.

ITEM NO. 02

All that piece and parcel of the land bearing Deshuvalli Village Sy. No. 9/1, measuring Acre-0-21-Guntas, Situated at Deshuvalli Village, Sathanur Hobli, Kanakapura Taluk, Ramanagara District, and bounded on:- East by: Land in Sy. No. 10/2, West by: Land in Sy. No. 9/2A, North by: Land in Sy. No. 9/2A, South by: Halla.

Bengaluru
Date: 21/03/2026

Sd/-
K S CHANDRA SHEKAR
Advocate,
No.21, Dhondusa Layout, Off. Bull Temple Road, Mount Joy Cross Road, Hanumanthanagar, Bangalore-560019. Mob: 9448366193.

DOCUMENTS LOST

I, Venkatalakshmi W/o P. Narayana R/at No.701/B, 3rd Cross, Kathriguppe Main Road, Ashok Nagar, Bengaluru-560050 do hereby solemnly state that, I am the absolute owner of the property situated at No.701/B, 3rd Cross, Kathriguppe Main Road, Ashok Nagar, Bengaluru-560050. I have obtained this property through Gift Deed registered on 28.05.2008 at Chamarajpet Sub-Registrar Office, Bengaluru in Book No.1, 11 Pages as Document No.CMP-1-00413-2008-09 and stored in CD No.CMPD2. I further state that recently I have lost the said Original Gift Deed and have raised a complaint with Hanumantha Nagar Police Station on 20.03.2026 and have obtained Lost Report No.2117225/2026. I further request the Public in general, If anybody have found this Document to contact **RAMESH N, Mob:9900655805/9035295419.** I further state that above given details are true to my knowledge vide affidavit dated 21.03.2026 sworn to Notary.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that, my client, Mr.Venkateshappa S/o.Venkatappa, Aged about 72 years, Residing at Karenahalli Hebbur Hobli, Thavarekere, Tumakuru 572122, has LOST THE ORIGINAL REGISTERED SALE DEED DATED 24.06.2013, REGISTERED AS DOCUMENT NO.MDL-1-02713-2013-14, IN BOOK-1, STORED in CD NO.MDLD168, IN THE OFFICE OF THE SENIOR SUB-REGISTRAR, MADANAYAKANAHALLI, BANGALORE, LOST AT MANJUNATHA NAGARA, BAGALAGUNTE, BANGALORE ON 13.03.2026, BETWEEN 12:00AM TO 05:13PM. A COMPLAINT IS LODGED ONLINE DATED 13.03.2026 VIDE LOST REPORT BEARING NO.2108100/2026, Finders may return the same to the near Police Station or contact the below address.

If any persons, firm, company, Financial institution or organization has any claim are holding the afore mentioned document, they may contact the below mentioned address in writing within 07 days from the date of this notice failing which it will be presumed that there are no claims.

BHASKAR.M,
ADVOCATES & LEGAL CONSULTANTS,
Office: #782/11, Ground Floor, 17th 'B' main Road 60th Cross, Near Lakshman Rao Skin Clinic, 5th Block, Bhasyam Circle, Rajajinagar, Bangalore-560 010 **Land line:** 080-48520073

FORM NO. 14
[See Regulation 33(2)]

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF FINANCE, DEPTT. OF FINANCIAL SERVICES,
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL - 2, BENGALURU
Jeevan Mangal Building (2nd Floor),
No. 4, Residency Road, Bengaluru - 560 025.

RC No. : 1125 / 2019

Punjab National Bank
(Erestwhile United Bank of India)
Asset Recovery Management Branch
No. 40, Kempegowda Road,
Bangalore - 560 009. ... Certificate Holder Bank
Versus
Sri G.R. Srinivas & Others ... Certified Debtor / Defendants

DEMAND NOTICE

1. Sri. G.R. Srinivas S/o. Late G. Rangaswamy
No. 116/A, 12th Cross, Mahalaxmi Layout, Bangalore - 560 086.
2. Smt. Nandini Srinivas W/o. Late G. Rangaswamy
No. 116/A, 12th Cross, Mahalaxmi Layout, Bangalore - 560 086.
3. Mr. K.M. Krishna
No. 10, 1st Cross, MIE Layout, Hesarghatta Road, Bagalkunte, Bangalore - 560073.
... Certified Debtor / Defendants

In view of the Recovery Certificate issued in **T.A. No. 2193 / 2017** passed by the **Hon'ble Presiding Officer, DRT, Bangalore on dated 29-06-2019 an amount of Rs. 41,54,943/- (Rupees Forty One Lakh(s) Fifty Four Thousand Nine Hundred Forty Three Only)** is due against you along with interest and costs from date failing of O.A.s till realization of the Recovery Certificate.

In addition to the sum aforesaid you will be liable to pay all charges and expenses incurred in respect of the service of this notice and other process that may be taken for recovering the amount due.

You are hereby called upon to deposit the amount within 15 days of the receipt of the notice, failing which the recovery shall be made as per rules.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Tribunal, on this date **02nd July, 2020.**

Recovery Officer - 1
Debts Recovery Tribunal - 2
Bangalore

Note : Attention is invited to Rule 16 of the Second Schedule of the Income Tax Act 1961 read with recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 which is reproduced below.

: "Rule 16(1) where a notice has been served on a defaulter under Rule 2, the defaulter or his representative or his representative in interest shall not be competent to mortgage, charge, lease or otherwise deal with any property belonging to him except with the permission of the Debts Recovery Officer, nor shall any civil court issue any process against such property in execution of a decree for the payment of money.

(2) Where an attachment has been made under this schedule any private transfer or delivery of the property attached or of any interest therein and any payment to the defaulter of any debt, dividend or other monies contrary to such attachment, shall be void, as against all claims enforceable under the attachment.

(3) You are also liable to disclose your assets both movable and immovable to this Tribunal along with the Income Tax Returns of last 5 years.

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT, OPEN TENDER (E-TENDER)

E-Tender on behalf of the President of India acting through Sr. Divisional Engineer (Co-Ordination), Divisional Railway Manager (Works), West Central Railway, Jabalpur for the following works:- **NIT No. :** DRMW-JBP-32-2026 dated:27.02.2026, **Name of work with location :** Mobile flash welding - 1533 joints in ET-JBP section under Senior Divisional (South) Jabalpur Jurisdiction, **Approx. Cost of the work :** 1,77,90,786/-, **Earnest Money :** 2,39,000/-, **Completion period :** 12 months, **Last date & time for sub-mission of tender (Upto 15.00 hrs on) :** 24.03.2026, **Tender to be opened at 15.15 hrs :** 24.03.2026, **NIT No. :** DRMW-JBP-38-2026 dated: 14.03.2026, **Name of work with location :** DDCE-Development of Dundi Goods Shed, **Approx. Cost of the work :** 12,44,04,621/-, **Earnest Money :** 24,88,100/-, **Completion period :** 18 months, **Last date & time for sub-mission of tender (Upto 15.00 hrs on) :** 10.04.2026, **Tender to be opened at 15.15 hrs :** 10.04.2026, **NIT No. :** DRMW-JBP-39-2026 dated: 16.03.2026, **Name of work with location :** Improvement of Goods shed facilities at Bargawan railway coal siding-BRRB under Assistant Divisional Engineer Beohari Sub division., **Approx. Cost of the work :** 22,86,35,894/-, **Earnest Money :** 45,72,800/-, **Completion period :** 18 months, **Last date & time for sub-mission of tender (Upto 15.00 hrs on) :** 10.04.2026, **Tender to be opened at 15.15 hrs :** 10.04.2026, **NIT No. :** DRMW-JBP-40-2026 dated: 17.03.2026, **Name of work with location :** Reconditioning of CMS crossing by Translamatic Robotic Welding on Jabalpur division., **Approx. Cost of the work :** 3,08,84,132/-, **Earnest Money :** 6,17,700/-, **Completion period :** 12 months, **Last date & time for sub-mission of tender (Upto 15.00 hrs on) :** 10.04.2026, **Tender to be opened at 15.15 hrs :** 10.04.2026 The complete information of the above é-tender' is available on website https://ireps.gov.in" and also placed on notice board of the Divisional Railway Manager (Works) Office, West Central Railway, Jabalpur. Tenders other than in the form of e-bids shall not be accepted against above tenders.

Sd./-
Divisional Branch Manager (Works), West Central Railway, Jabalpur

स्वच्छ भारत अभियान एक कदम स्वच्छता की ओर

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

PALAKKAD DIVISION

Sr. Divisional Engineer / Co-ordination / Southern Railway / Palakkad invites E-TENDERS for the following works.

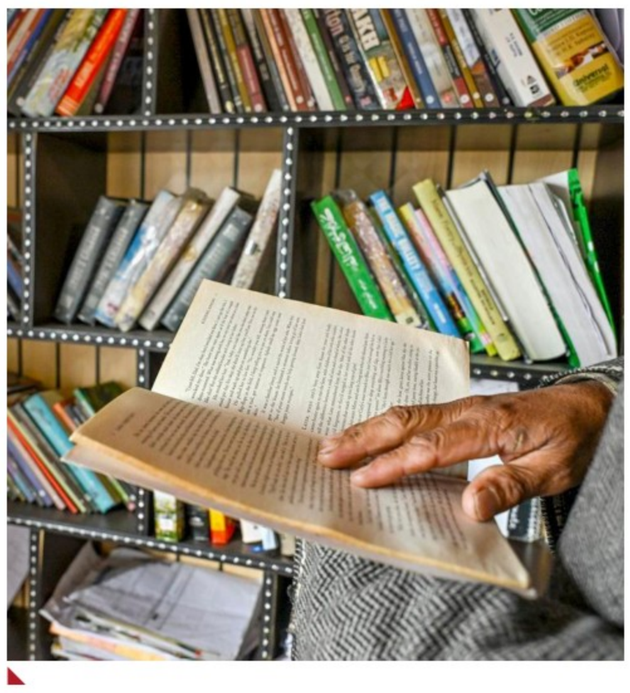
E-TENDER NOTICE No. PGT/OT/06/2026 dated 19/03/2026

S. No	Name of work	Approximate Cash value in (₹) lakh	Bid Security Amount (₹)	Tender closing date on 15.00 hrs	Completion Period in Months
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1	Palakkad Division-Palakkad-Palakkad Town section-Construction of Boundary wall (3.5 km) at encroachment prone, heavily populated/ inhabited locations.	416.69	3,58,400	21/04/2026	Eight
2	Improvements to power supply arrangements by provision of SMPS based IPS with Building at CLMD station of Palakkad division; Provision of SMPS based IPS with Building at Chullimada (CLMD) station of Palakkad division based on Drg No. DYCECNMAQ/08-2024	50.86	1,01,700	10/04/2026	Six
3	Palakkad Division: Provision of acid proof tiles (both in floor and wall) in battery room of SP/SSP/TSS in Palakkad Division.	30.78	61,600	10/04/2026	Four
4	Palakkad Division-Improvements to Level crossings at Palakkad Division.	196.17	2,48,100	21/04/2026	Eighteen

1. All the contracts on Works/goods/services will be subject to the new GST Act as applicable from time to time.
2. Contractors/Suppliers have to register themselves with GST authorities and to furnish the GST registration number in order to process the bills from 01.7.2017 onwards.
3. For complete details of the above tenders please visit Website "**http://www.ireps.gov.in**."

Note: It is the responsibility of the Tenderer to check any corrigendum issued for any correction or modifications uploaded subsequently in website; the same shall be taken in to account while submitting Tender.

Sr. Divisional Engineer/Co-ordination/
Palakkad
(For and on behalf of the President of India)



Reading hour: A villager peruses a book inside a home library, as residents open their houses to both books and visitors.

By the lake: A man walks along the banks of Wular Lake near Aragam. The quiet hills and scenery draw the peace-loving tourist to the spot.

Off the beaten track: The quaint hamlet, with its winding lanes. is slowly making a name for itself as an off-beat destination for those with literary inclinations.

In steady hands: A man carries books across a stream, showing the village's growing culture of reading in nooks and corners.

After the bell: Students play in a school, as learning extends beyond classrooms into shared community spaces.

Assistant Director of Social Welfare Department found dead at his office

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

An Assistant Director of Social Welfare Department from Tumakuru was found dead at the office where he worked in Pavagada on Friday, after recording a video alleging harassment by his senior officer.

The deceased has been identified as Mallikarjunaiah G.E., a native of Gundarlahalli near Pavagada.

The police have booked Krishnappa, Joint Director of the Social Welfare Department, Tumakuru, the senior officer named by Mallikarjunaiah in the video, under Section 108 of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, for abetment to suicide. The incident occurred at the Assistant Director's office in Pavagada around 6 p.m. on Friday, according to police sources. In the final video he recorded, Mallikarjunaiah said that he took the extreme step due to the hardship caused by Krishnappa.

An officer investigating the case told *The Hindu* that a preliminary inquiry has been launched into the circumstances of the death. Based on the findings, a decision will be taken on whether to arrest the accused. The police will also examine whether the allegation of "harassment" has merit.

According to the officer, Mallikarjunaiah was due to retire at the end of March. However, an inquiry had been initiated against him following a news report published in a local newspaper.

The order issued by Krishnappa, dated March 12, 2026, stated that the inquiry was initiated following directions from the Commissioner of the Social Welfare Department, Bengaluru, to submit a report after examining hostel and official records.

(If you are in distress or having suicidal tendencies, please reach out to these 24/7 helplines: KIRAN at 1800-599-0019 or Arogya Sahayavani at 104 for help.)

From Page One

OTS scheme rolled out

As of February-end, total arrears stand at ₹851.33 crore The scheme will apply to domestic, commercial, and industrial consumers. Government departments and institutions will also be covered through a different mechanism.

To facilitate payments, BWSSB will issue detailed statements to defaulters. Payments can be made through kiosks, the online portal, and digital platforms.

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UG Programmes:
- TNHSE +2 Results announcement date to be considered as **Day 1**
- **Day 2:** Registration with marks closes at **5.00 PM** for TNHSE board (for other boards, refer the college website). Rank list and counselling date will be communicated to all applicants after **10.00 PM** through mail.
- **Day 3:** Admission counselling for special categories (Sports, NCC, Ex-servicemen & Disability) will be conducted according to ranking within respective categories.
- **Day 4:** General Admission counselling will be conducted in the order of rank through a single–window system.
- Admission counselling for spot admission programmes (as listed on the website) begins on the date of publication of the respective board results.

PG Programmes:
- PG applicants must submit separate application for each programme. Last date for submission of the PG application will be updated in the college website in the last week of May 2026.
- Refer to the college website for PG admission process and spot admission programme process.

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Published by Nirmala Lakshman at No 19&21, Bhagwan Mahaveer Road, Bengaluru-560001 and Printed by C. Sridhar at Plot No. 13-D, Bommasandra-Jigani Link Road, KIADB Industrial Area, Bommasandra, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru-560099 on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., Chennai-600002. Editor: Suresh Nambath Chandrasekar (Responsible for selection of news under the PRP Act).
ISSN 0971 - 751X

Across the loom: Yarn, dyes, and logistics costs surge amid West Asia tensions

As many of the materials used across the textile chain are derived from petrochemicals, the impact has been felt across multiple stages, with processing units raising their charges

Rishita Khanna
BENGALURU

Processing units, which handle dyeing, washing and finishing of fabric, have increased job work charges.

Production costs in the textile industry have risen sharply, driven by increases across key inputs, from yarn and chemical dyes to processing charges, amid tensions in West Asia. As many of the materials used across the textile chain, including polyester, nylon and several dyeing chemicals, are derived from petrochemicals, the impact has been felt across multiple stages, with processing units raising their charges. Logistics costs, too, have increased significantly.

Those in the textile and garment business told *The Hindu* that the increase is already being felt across the supply chain. If the situation persists for another week, they said, the pressure is likely to reflect in fabric and garment prices.

Rise in service fee

Processing units, which handle dyeing, washing and finishing of fabric, have increased job work charges (service fee charged for processing raw material) from ₹1 to ₹3 per metre. The cost of colour and chemical inputs has also risen sharply, in some cases by up to 60%, said trade activist Sajjan Raj Mehta.

He added that prices are rising at every stage, worsening the burden on the industry, which depends on inter-State operations. Fabric is often sourced from one State, while processing is largely carried out in hubs such as Surat. "Logistics costs have increased to ₹600-650 from ₹400 per load, and beyond that, many units are not willing to take new orders," he said.

Those in the textile and garment business say that if the situation persists for another week, the pressure is likely to reflect in fabric and garment prices

Yarn prices have increased by 20% to 40%, said Mahaveer Raj Purohit, another manufacturer. Grey fabric (the unfinished base material) has seen a rise of up to ₹5 per metre. As fabric passes through multiple stages before reaching the market, these increases are beginning to accumulate and are likely to reflect in overall costs if the situation continues, he said.

Traders said that many wholesalers have begun insisting on only "cash transactions" for buyers to reduce risk.

Taking advantage

Weavers alleged that some mother yarn manufacturers in Karnataka and other States have withheld deliveries of pre-booked orders following the recent rise in prices.

Orders placed months ago at lower rates are not being honoured, they said, while supplies are being diverted and sold at current market prices.

Some traders also claim that many are taking advantage of this situation. Despite adequate stock, they said, deliveries at previously agreed prices are being avoided, with buyers instead being pushed to purchase material at higher rates.

This has led to a standoff, said Mahantesh Reddy, a manufacturer from Chickpet, noting that units may now be forced to procure yarn from the open market at significantly higher rates if earlier orders are not fulfilled. This, he said, could result in losses of ₹15 lakh to ₹25 lakh per unit.

"Prices across key yarn categories have also risen sharply over the past three weeks. Polyester filament yarn, nylon yarn, and viscose staple yarn have all seen significant increases," Mr. Reddy said.

He added that the textile industry remains heavily dependent on West Asia, both for raw materials and fuel, as many inputs are crude oil derivatives.

The situation has pushed up the cost of petrochemical-based inputs used in yarn production, while also increasing transportation and processing costs due to higher fuel prices and supply uncertainty.

Welding, forging units flag LPG shortage

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

At a meeting held on Saturday with FKCCI president Uma Reddy, industry representatives said they were already facing supply constraints, which are impacting day-to-day activities. FILE PHOTO.

Industries such as battery manufacturing, welding, and forging units, which rely on LPG for heat-based processes, have flagged LPG shortages to the Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FKCCI), saying the disruption has begun to affect their operations.

At a meeting held on Saturday with FKCCI president Uma Reddy, industry representatives said they were already facing supply constraints, which are impacting day-to-day activities.

However, Ms. Reddy noted that awareness around alternatives remains limited, as many of the industries have piped natural gas (PNG) availability. "In areas such as Peenya Industrial Area, several units were found to be unaware of the availability of PNG, which could serve as a substitute in many cases. FKCCI has taken up the issue, and efforts are being made to address these gaps," she told *The Hindu*.

The hotel industry, which has been among the worst affected, also raised concerns during the meeting regarding the non-availability of commercial LPG cylinders.

Ms. Reddy, however, said the government has been helping with LPG supply, with efforts to increase the supply, which is likely to help stabilise the situation in the coming days.

New Mangalore Port to receive at least 72,700 tonnes of LPG in the coming week

Anil Kumar Sastry
MANGALURU

The New Mangalore Port. FILE PHOTO

The New Mangalore Port is set to receive at least 72,700 tonnes of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) in the coming week with one LPG tanker scheduled to discharge 16,714 tonnes fuel on Sunday at the port.

According to the NMP Authority's Daily Vessel Position, LPG tanker *Pyxis Pioneer* with a gross tonnage of 47,236 tonnes and sailing under the Singapore flag will arrive at Berth No. 13 at 6 a.m. on Sunday.

The tanker that sailed out of Port of Nederland, Texas, in the United States of America on February 14, would discharge 16,714 tonnes of LPG for Aegis Logistics Ltd. at New Mangalore.

It would sail out on Monday early morning.

Meanwhile, LPG tanker *Apollo Ocean* would call on NMP on March 25 to discharge 26,687 tonnes of LPG for Indian Oi Corporation Ltd. and Bharat Petroleum corporation Ltd. The vessel, sailing under the Vietnam flag, has gross tonnage of 46,025 tonnes and would arrive from Vadinar Port in Jamnagar, Gujarat.

LPG tanker *Shivalik* that was expected to bring 26,000 tonnes of LPG to Mangaluru on March 18, had instead transferred the cargo to *Apollo Ocean* at Vadinar Port.

LPG tanker *Pyxis Pioneer* with a gross tonnage of 47,236 tonnes and sailing under the Singapore flag will arrive at Berth No. 13 at 6 a.m. on Sunday

One more LPG tanker from the U.S. would arrive at New Mangalore Port with 30,000 tonnes of LPG meant for Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (HPCL) on March 29, sources in NMPA said.

The HPCL LPG import facility in Mangaluru transfers the imported LPG to local bottling plants as well as pumps the gas towards Bengaluru and beyond through the Mangaluru-Bengaluru LPG pipeline.

More biogas plants planned as city boosts wet waste processing

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy inaugurating a 5TPD bio-methanisation plant at Koramangala on Saturday.

The Bangalore Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML) is expanding its biomethanation infrastructure to convert wet waste into biogas, with new large-scale projects in the pipeline.

The waste management agency has undertaken the construction of four decentralised biomethanation plants. Two plants in wards Koramangala and Banasawadi have been completed and are ready for operation, while two others in wards Anjanapura and A. Narayanapura are under construction, Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy, who inaugurated the 5TPD bio-methanisation plant in Koramangala on Saturday, said.

Mr. Reddy said that a major project is being planned in collaboration with GAIL (India) to establish a biogas plant with a capacity of around 300 TPD. At Kannahalli, approval has been granted for a 1,000 TPD plant in partnership with a private firm, Satarem. Meanwhile, a privately operated 50 TPD facility at Herohalli, empanelled as a bulk waste vendor, is producing around 1,500 kg of gas, which is being converted into compressed biogas (CBG) for sale, with plans to extend supply to households via pipelines, he added.

Pointing at the official data, the Minister said that 12 biogas plants were previously constructed across the city, of which six are currently operational.

Each plant has a capacity to process five tonnes of wet waste per day, collectively handling around 30 tonnes daily. The remaining six plants are slated for renovation, he said.

"On average, one tonne of wet waste yields 30-50 kg of biogas, with each operational plant producing roughly 200 kg of gas per day. The biogas is primarily used for captive consumption, while surplus gas is utilised for electricity generation, including powering nearby street lights," Mr. Reddy said, adding that in Koramangala Ward, an upgraded 8.5-tonne plant supplies about 120 kg of gas daily to nearby hotels after internal usage, generating an estimated ₹8,400 per day at a rate of ₹70 per kg.

Yakshagana artist Govinda Bhat dead

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

Senior Yakshagana artist Surikumeri K. Govinda Bhat passed away at his residence at Heddur, near Tirthahalli on Friday night. He was 88 and is survived by three sons.

A recipient of the Kendra Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for 2016 and Karnataka Rajyotsava Award for 2008, Bhat was a professional artist of Tenku Thittu school of Yakshagana for nearly seven decades.

Indiaspora to host multiple events in city

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Global AI Summit will offer a high-level exploration of the current ways in which AI is reshaping industries. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

The 2026 Indiaspora Forum will bring together global changemakers for conversations on AI, climate and sustainability, and more

Indiaspora, a San Francisco-based non-profit organisation which connects leaders of the Indian diaspora, is holding its 2026 Indiaspora Forum from Sunday to Tuesday and also a Global AI Summit on Wednesday, at J.W. Marriott Prestige Golfshire Resort in Bengaluru.

The 2026 Indiaspora Forum will bring together global changemakers for conversations on topics such as Artificial Intelligence, climate and sustainability, health, education, geopolitics, philanthropy, and India's cultural and literary heritage, say the organisers of the event.

Speakers would include Vijay Amritraj, founder, Vijay Amritraj Foundation; Sanjiv Bajaj, chairman, Bajaj Finserv Limited; Gita Gopinath, former first deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund; Kiran Nadar, founder, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, and Nandan Nilekani, co-founder and Chairman, Infosys.

Indiaspora's 4th Global AI Summit, on March 25, is expected to bring together leading founders of top 100 start-ups, policymakers, investors, and technocrats to examine how AI is rapidly transforming industries and redefining the future of business.

According to information shared by Indiaspora, the Global AI Summit will offer a high-level exploration of the current ways in which AI is reshaping industries, alongside deep dives into breakthrough innovations expected to drive the next wave of economic and technological transformation.

M.R Rangaswami, founder and chairman, Indiaspora, said, "We have convened very successful global AI summits for the diaspora in Silicon Valley and Dubai, and this year we chose Bengaluru to bring the conversation to India. By convening diaspora leaders alongside global experts and Indian innovators, we are creating a powerful exchange of ideas that reflects India's central role in shaping the future of AI."

Discussions would spotlight how Global Capability Centers (GCCs) are adopting AI at scale, building advanced capability hubs, and establishing global centers of excellence, and how Indian corporations are utilising AI throughout their businesses, the NGO said.

"As AI moves from experimentation to real-world deployment, forums like the Indiaspora Global AI Summit create important spaces to exchange perspectives, learn from each other, and build relationships that strengthen the broader innovation ecosystem," said Vani Kola, managing director, Kalaari Capital.

Timings
BENGALURU

SUNDAY, MAR. 22	
RISE 06:23	SET 18:30
RISE 08:36	SET 21:46
MONDAY, MAR. 23	
RISE 06:22	SET 18:31
RISE 09:29	SET 22:50
TUESDAY, MAR. 24	
RISE 06:21	SET 18:31
RISE 10:26	SET 23:55

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	30	20
Mysuru	34	18
Bengaluru	32	20

Bengaluru Today
32°C The weather will be dry. Day will be little warm. Night will be pleasant.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
32°C Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be little warm. Night will be pleasant. Dry weather to occur.

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THE HINDU
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‘Govt. complains about backlog, but feeds it too as the biggest litigant’

Apex court judge B.V. Nagarathna says the results of ceaseless litigation up through the multiple tiers of courts lead not only to growing pendency but even stagnation owing to the inability of the judiciary to cope with the docket explosion

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Supreme Court judge Justice B.V. Nagarathna on Saturday said the government raises concerns about backlog in courts while simultaneously feeding that pendency through relentless litigation.

Justice Nagarathna was addressing judges and senior advocates at the Supreme Court Bar Association’s First National Conference on the theme ‘Reimagining Judicial Governance: Strengthening Institutions for Democratic Justice’ in Bengaluru.

“The pattern produces a paradox. The government publicly expresses concern about judicial backlog while simultaneously feeding that backlog through relentless litigation. The State becomes both the complainant and the cause,” Justice Nagarathna said.

> The State is expected to litigate with restraint and be a model litigator, but that does not happen. It goes on litigating until the end.
>
> **B.V. NAGARATHNA**
> Supreme Court Judge

Dual role

The senior judge said the government donned a dual role. It was the provider of infrastructure and judicial reforms for courts, but also the biggest litigant. “The government is the biggest litigator, whether it is at the Central level or at the State level. The State is expected to litigate with restraint and be a model litigator, but that does not happen. It goes on litigating until the end. The government is not only a mere participant in litigation, it is also the single largest generator of litigation,” Justice Nagarathna said.

Justice Nagarathna interestingly said that a government officer who settled a dispute would face audit objections. On the other hand, an official who filed an appeal or a revision rarely faced criticism.

“An appeal signals diligence, whereas a decision not to file an appeal will invite vigilance inquiries,” the judge pointed out. As a result, bureaucratic caution has added to case pendency, Justice Nagarathna said. “The result is predictable. Appeals become routine rather than rare.”

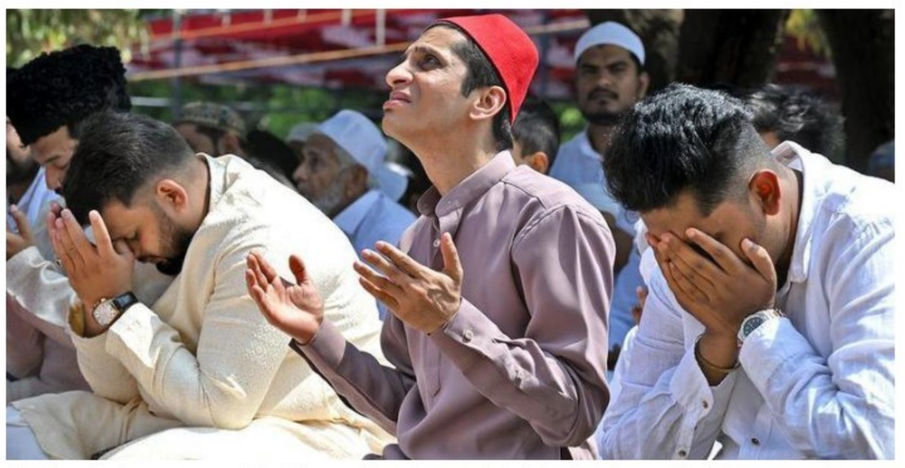
Poor court capacity

Justice Nagarathna said the results of ceaseless litigation up through the multiple tiers of courts lead not only to growing pendency but even stagnation owing to the inability of the judiciary to cope with the docket explosion. “The volume of disputes grows with population, economic activity, and regulatory expansion. But the institutional capacity of courts grows slowly,” the judge said.

“Judicial infrastructure rarely receives sustained political attention. Expanding courts does not generate the same immediate visibility as constructing highways or launching welfare programmes. The political incentive is weak when it comes to judicial infrastructure investment. Therefore, the percentage allotted is also very less,” she noted.

Justice Nagarathna recommended the constitution of a Judicial Reforms Commission to address the problem of chronic pendency and recommend corrective measures.

Pious followers



Muslims offering prayers on Id-ul-Fitr, marking the end of the Islamic holy month of Ramzan, at the Masjid-E-Khadria in Bengaluru on Saturday. ALLEN EGENUSE J.

‘Jewellery sector continues to show resilience’

BENGALURU: India’s gem and jewellery industry continues to demonstrate remarkable resilience and a spirit of innovation, said Kirit Bhansali, chairman of the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC), at the inauguration of the 4th edition of IIJS Bharat-Tritiya 2026 at Bengaluru International Exhibition Centre (BIEC) here on Saturday. Supported by the Government of Karnataka and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the 2026 edition of the expo features over 1,100 exhibitors across over 1,900 stalls.

JAAP-PG
https://jaappg.admissions.nic.in/ 2026
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Joint Admission for Architecture and Planning – Post Graduate (JAAP-PG) 2026

Applications are invited for admission to various postgraduate degree courses at three Institutions, namely, **School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi; School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal and School of Planning and Architecture, Vijayawada** for the Academic Session 2026-27 as under:

1. **Master of Architecture:** (i) Architectural Conservation / Conservation / Master of Conservation, (ii) Landscape Architecture, (iii) Urban Design, and (iv) Sustainable Architecture.
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3. **Master of Building Engineering and Management**
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Minimum qualifying marks: At least 55% marks or 6.0 CGPA at qualifying examination, or 50% marks or 5.5 CGPA for the reserved categories SC/ST/ PwD

Applicants may visit the official websites of SPA, Delhi, Bhopal and Vijayawada for Course Details

Selection Criteria for selection of candidates shall be based on: (i) Performance in Qualifying Examination; (ii) Valid GATE/CEED/UGC-NET Score, as applicable; (iii) Physical Interaction, and (iv) Work Experience

Important Dates

LAST DATE OF REGISTRATION HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO 29th MARCH, 2026

Date of opening of online applications and opening of Payment Link	2nd March, 2026
Date of closing of applications	29th March, 2026
Display of list of eligible applicants for Interaction	31st March, 2026
Physical Interaction (may include interviews, portfolio assessment, Statement of Purpose **at SPA Delhi**	16th April, 2026 – 21st April, 2026
Announcement of Result / Display of the Rank List	28th April, 2026
Seat Allotment and Various Rounds of Counseling	28th April, 2026 – 23rd May, 2026
SPECIAL ROUND of Counseling	03rd June, 2026 – 10th July, 2026
Display of Information regarding **SPOT ROUND** Counseling (if any)	20th July, 2026
Physical Document Verification (in person at allotted institutions) and Commencement of Classes.	as per dates displayed by the respective Institutions on their Websites

General Instructions

1. Application fee is ₹ 3,500/- (Non-refundable), for Indian Nationals. For reserved categories SC, ST, EWS and PwD categories, the application fee is ₹ 1,750/- (Non-refundable).
2. The Foreign Nationals/ NRI/ PIO/OCI seeking admission in any of the Postgraduate Courses shall apply separately through DASA 2026 portal.
3. Candidate can exercise **any number of choices based on eligibility for the course applied for in any of the Institutions.**
4. Admission to Post Graduate Degree Courses against Kashmiri Migrant Reserved Seats as per the rules over and above the total number of PG seats of the respective Institute.
5. 5% seats are reserved for persons with benchmark disabilities on horizontal basis. These shall be adjusted against the respective reservations for OG, SC, ST, EWS and OBC (NCL) Categories as per provision for PwD reservations, Government of India.
6. Institutions reserve the right to give admissions up to 10% of the intake as supernumerary seats.
7. GATE and CEED qualified candidates having valid Score Card shall be eligible for the scholarship.
8. All dates mentioned are subject to change.
9. Candidates in final year may submit marksheet / transcript/ grade sheet till the pre-final year. In such cases, all admissions shall be provisional subject to the fulfillment of the eligibility criteria after receiving the final result in the qualifying examination.
10. Sponsored candidates from Government organizations, quasi-Government organizations, PSUs should apply through proper channel and the Selection Criteria for such candidates MAY BE relaxed as decided by the Selection Committee considering the suitability of the candidate on case-to-case basis. Such candidates shall apply separately through the websites of respective Institutions.
11. For further details visit https://jaappg.admissions.nic.in/ and for any clarifications, contact: jaappg2026@spa.ac.in .

Registrar, SPA, Delhi
JAAP PG 2026, Host Institution

The Way Forward Sometimes
Begins with a U-Turn

File Your Updated Income Tax Return (ITR-U) before

31st March, 2026

Income tax Department receives information relating to financial transactions from various sources like banks, SROs, financial institutions, foreign jurisdictions, charitable organisations, commercial establishments and Law Enforcement Agencies etc. The information is shared with taxpayers in AIS, e- verification and through SAKSHAM NUDGE campaigns.

Taxpayers are accordingly advised to see AIS, e-campaigns and SAKSHAM NUDGE messages related to unreported income or unsupported deductions / exemptions and review their ITR to correct if any income is not disclosed or unsupported claims have been made and file their updated ITR under section 139(8A)at specific rate. The time limit for filing an updated return is four years from the end of the relevant Assessment Year.

Key Features of an Updated Return:

- **Purpose:** To promote voluntary compliance and reduce litigation.
- **Form:** An updated return must be filed using Form ITR-U along with the applicable ITR form (ITR-1 To ITR-7) for the relevant assessment year.
- **Additional Tax:** Filing an ITR-U requires the payment of additional tax, which varies based on the timing of the filing.
- **Restrictions:** An Updated Return cannot be a return of loss, decrease the total tax liability, or result in increase of income tax refund.

Additional Tax Rates

The amount of additional tax (calculated on the aggregate of tax and interest payable) depends on when the return is filed:

ITR U - for the AY	Additional tax payable (if filed before 31.03.2026)
AY 2024-25	25% additional tax
AY 2023-24	50% additional tax
AY 2022-23	60% additional tax
AY 2021-22	70% additional tax

For more information and to pay income tax
visit: www.incometax.gov.in

CBC 15401/13/0015/2526

For Tutorial on ITR-U Scan QR code

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  - Information Technology
  - Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering
  - Electrical and Electronics Engineering

Admission to B.Tech. programme is based solely on JEE Main rank. Students can join IIIT Bhubaneswar through JoSSA/CSAB counselling process. Odisha state students qualified in JEE Main can also join through Institute's own counselling process.

Masters Programme

- **M.Tech. in:**
  - Computer Science & Engineering
  - VLSI Design and Signal Processing

Admission to M.Tech. program is conducted through CCMT. GATE-qualified candidates are eligible for scholarship from AICTE.

- **MS by Research in Information Security**

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  - Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering
  - Electrical Engineering

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Email Id: btechadmission@iiit-bh.ac.in

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BRIDEGROOMS WANTED

BENGALI

Seeking Alliance from a Genial, eclectic & professionally well-established, South India based Bengali Groom Aged 37-42 years for a Creative and Cultured Bengali Banerjee Faculty, Aged 37, working at a Top Ranking University in Coimbatore. Contact details: rumpa.manjari7@gmail.com

COSMOPOLITAN

MALAYALEE CATHOLIC parents seek alliance for their daughter 29/ 158cm, B.Tech., MS., working in Netherlands. Contact 9600017351

PG DOCTOR, April 1994, fair, slim, BC, PG Doctor or well settled groom from any profession, business, caste and community. Cont. 9444366088

HINDU LINGAYAT 28/172 /B Tech top NIT(2014–2018)/software job for 3 years 15L PA(2018–2021)/preparation for UPSC went upto interview (2021–2026) want to persue her career again / 21L PA(through properties and investments) parents both gazetted officers seeks central/ state/psu officers/PG doctors/ highly placed private sector/soft ware employees caste and location no bar 9505063063

BEAUTIFUL BRAHMIN 30, 165cm, educated (BE/MBA), accomplished. Seeks compatible, VEG groom. Cultured family. Lang. no bar. Call/ WA 9345634365

29 YEARS/IT Consulting Professional/Christian (RC) open to both Christians and Hindus preferably from Chennai. You may contact: arokiyapaulin@gmail.com or 98414 03226 with your profile and also for receiving profile of the bride.

DOCTOR

ROMAN CATHOLIC, MD (Anaesthesiology), Reputed School, College, 27 yrs, Fair, Highly Educated Family in Chennai, Seeks Doctors Catholic groom, WhatsApp Profile – 7550065082

PARENTS OF Obstetrician & Gynaecologist MBBS MS F.MAS 91 Born 158cm Gavara Naidu CNB looking for suitable well settled groom 9443394490

SEEKING GROOM for my daughter born Dec 1993 MS General Surgery doing 3rd year MCh in Neuro Surgery ht 160 cm from PG Doctor or suitably qualified preferably from Mudaliar/ Pillai Contact 7904339374

GROOM WANTED for 32 years Doctor MS (opthal) Senior Resident cadre. Inter caste parents (Father SC and Mother Telugu). Seeks Doctors groom only. Contact No. 8148399916 / 9003232279

HINDU VISWAKARMA Beautiful, rich 5'.5"/1994/ MBBS+MD+DNB / Bangalore /doctor bride (f– IAS) requires MBBS+PG– Viswakarma/ forward Hindu doctor groom (preferably willing to settle @ Bangalore) Mobile: 9743403900

DKV 29 Lady Radiologist, MD, Divorced, Chennai 9047119910

Fair, Cultured, Good Looking, Slim, Doctor Girl 36/165 MD, Cardiac Anesthesiologist, Chennai based doctor family Father Keralite Nair Mother from Tamilnadu. Looking for Doctor groom or Engineer from respectable family. 98400 50381 / 98409 85383

Seeking Groom for my Daughter born Sep 1991, MBBS, MD Pathology (2nd year) in Chennai, 165cm, seeks suitable PG Doctor, CA, Engineer, from well Settled Telugu Naidu or Other Backward Community. Ct: 98401 96667.

HINDU/ NAIDU 91 born Dr. Girl MBBS MD Simham / Magam seeks MD, MS, MCH boy, any Naidu / any Tamil BC / MBC. Contact Parents: 94446 73311

Hindu Adi Dravida (PR) Fair, 26yrs, MBBS, Rich well settled in Chennai seeks Doctors/IAS/Grade1 officers. 9444176026

ENGINEER

HINDU JANGAM 39 yrs 157 cm. Never married. M.Tech, Ph.D. Employed in MNC Bangalore. Coimbatore native. Well settled and educated family seeks suitable GROOM. Contact 9486476641.

THE HINDU

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ENGINEER

Mudaliar / Vanniar 31Y /165cm Doctor MBBS, fellowship in Diabetology seeks Engineer Grooms. Ph: 94444 54188

ENGLISH

BEAUTIFUL, WARM–HEARTED, well–traveled and educated, US–based Tanzanian Christian lawyer, 44. Seeks compatible, family–oriented and well–settled groom, willing to relocate. Contact: valence.couture0@icloud.com. Serious inquiries only.

GOVT / QUASI GOVT

Bengali Bride: Graduate(35, 149 Cm) Pursuing Music; Parents (Father Retd. Central Govt officer) seek a Bengali / South Indian Boy (37-40 yrs) Working in Delhi NCR. Contact: 9560647111

KANNADA

BRIDEGROOM WANTED
FOR
KANNADA SHIVALI BRAHMIN
AGED 29, BORN - AUG '96.
WELL SETTLED. B.ARCH & MBA,
OWN HOUSE AT CHENNAI,
PRESENTLY WORKING
AT HYDERABAD **EARNING**
20LAKHS PER ANNUM
HEIGHT - 5.2.
~ SEEKS ~
SUITABLE BRIDEGROOM
FROM SAME CASTE
BRIDE FATHER
INDUSTRIALIST
BRIDE MOTHER
CENTRAL GOVT.
ASST COMMISSIONER
Respond with photo & Full details
sanjusanjana99@yahoo.com

MALAYALAM

Nair Girl Pursuing PhD in USA, 36 yrs, 160 cms. Well Placed Youth in USA please whatsapp 9633025740

NRI

NRI GROOM wanted-Nair girl, 52, Msc PhD, Scientist, never married, US ctzn Chicago.Malayalam/Tamil US residing boys only contact: 9895824803

TAMIL

CHRISTIAN, 33, MS, Doctor, Rich, 30 lakhs. PH: 8138900316

MUSLIM, 35, B.Tech, Private, 20 lakhs. PH:8138900470

CHRISTIAN, 23, BDS, Upper Middle class. PH:8138901281

CHRISTIAN, 39, Private, 30 Lakhs, MHRM. PH:8137003263

CHRISTIAN, DOCTOR, 38 Years Unmarried, Well Settled Family. Seeks Unmarried Doctor Groom. Ct: 7550286805

CSI CHRISTIAN, 35/154, Fair, MBBS., MD Govt. Doctor Girl Chennai, Seeks well placed Protestant Christian Groom. Contact:84382 78915

ROMAN CATHOLIC Nadar, 23 / 167, B.Arch, Working as Junior Nodular Designer in Coimbatore Salary Rs 300000 PA, O Negative Blood Group, Native of Kanyakumari District, presently settled in Tiruchirapalli, Seeks suitable Boy. Contact : 94421 62159.

MUSLIM, 35, M.Tech, 20 lakhs. Ph: 8137001257

CHRISTIAN, RC NADAR, 23, BDS, Upper middle class. Ph: 7356483111

✔ **MUSLIM GIRL 39 well mannered seeks educated, employed, unmarried Tamil Muslim groom. 9444235779**

CHRISTIAN, 28, B.Tech, Govt. job, 30 lakhs, NRI. Ph: 8137001253.

CHRISTIAN, 28, Fair, Upper middle class, MD, Doctor. Ph: 8138900312

BORN AGAIN Christian, 45yrs/152, MBBS, MD doctor, seeks christian groom, Chennai. CT – 9500188067

LOOKING FOR God Fearing, Family Oriented, Canadian or American Citizen, Age 30–35 for a Born again Canadian Citizen Bride Age 29 height 154cm Professional, have Biblical values and Faith. Profile and Photo to rvjplanning@gmail.com / 9677181606

✔ **TAMIL VISWAKARMA,** 26 years, 56 with a wheatish complexion, is a Senior Designer earning 9 LPA. A graduate in Textile Design from NIFT – National Institute of Fashion Technology, Chennai, she belongs to Magaram, Avitam 1 Padam, and seeks a professional groom. Contact: 9962863038.

TAMIL

HINDU, 26, Anycaste, Govt, Nurse, 20 lakhs. PH:8138900553

THULUVA VELLALA, 26/162cm ,BE.,MBA, Employed,Revathi,Parents Employed (MNC/Govt) seeks Well Settled Professionally Qualified Groom 9952013212

HINDU SC AD 26/151,MSC Thiruvonam Magaram Fair Good Looking Chennai. Seeks Govt /Pvt Employed Groom From Chennai Good Family. wh:9629412661

Hindu SC/PR aged 34 yrs B.E working in Public sector bank as Manager Rs 1 Lac PM 1st Marriage seeks compatible employed groom Ct: 89036 70160

HINDU / SC / PR aged 36yrs B.Tech SWE in Chennai Rs.1 Lac PM 1st marriage seeks compatible employed groom Ct: 89036 70160

GROOM WANTED Hindu Nadar 29yrs BE MS working software 1.5Lp/m well educated family 9841329471/ 9380791999

RICH MUDALIYAR, 35yrs, BE, MBA, Elite business family, Seeks Suitable Groom. Contact: 6385293227

MUDALIAR (CNB) : 30/ Good Looking B.E,MS (USA)., Data scientist, Hyd, Well settled Family, seeks groom Eng/Doct – Bang/Hyd – 8925019776

VANNIYAR, BDS, 33, Revathi, Employed, middle class family, Groom from same community needed. 98409 61251

MUDALIAR 37 165 cm BE Professional Chennai seeks High Prof Busi Chennai Groom CNB Geetham 9884858014

AGAMUDI MUDALIAR, Elite Family, 34/ 165, Mirugasim, 8 Raghu, PG (HR, MNC) Seeks MS, M.Tech Groom 9176780777

GROOM WANTED Rich Mudaliyar, 32yrs, B.Tech, MBA,Working in Bangalore, Elite business family: 9962791888

GROOM WANTED Cast No Bar 27 years, MBBS, MD, Well Educated Family in Chennai Contact: 6385293227

E.NITHYA (30yrs) B.Tech(Chemical Engg) seeks groom from Class 1 officer of Central / State Government from SC/ST community(Hindu).9969228297

PILLAI 25Yrs/157cm Pooja Fair BE Hospital Mgt Canada seeks grooms any Country.9894107825, 9500595339

SEEKING PROFESSIONAL for 44yr SC Adidravida unmarried IT Professional from Chennai holding Singapore PR. Cont–nimmi1952@gmail.com/+91720 0942776/+91 9790921761

Vanniar, MSC MPhil PhD 43yrs Punarpoosam Prof HOD seeks groom from same community. 90032 43056

FAIR HINDU Mudaliyar Doctor 30/165, 75 Kg, working in NHS, UK. Seeks groom from Hindu Doctors either in UK or those willing to relocate / CNB / Contact : 87784 23359.

SC 43 Physiotherapist First Marriage CNB Coimbatore seeks Groom CT: Whatsapp: 9489176568

GROOM WANTED Naidu, 31yrs, M.Tech, Industries with commercial complex in Chennai Ph: 6385293227

HINDU, 23, Pillai, M.Sc, Upper Middle class,30 lakhs. Ph: 8138900553

GROOM WANTED Hindu Nadar 31yrs MBBS, MS, Elite business family Ph:9841329471 / 9380791999

GROOM WANTED Rich Mudaliyar, 24yrs,B.Tech, Own promoters in Chennai Ph:6385293227

HINDU, 38, UK, any caste, PhD, 10 crores. Ph: 8138901281

HASTHAM 38 MCA well settled in Chennai seeks prof qualified Pillai/Mudaliar groom. 8925640261/ 8220757159

Hindu Girl only Daughter Very Rich Beautiful 28 innocent Divorcee No Child. Boy should be Hindu below 33 from Elite Government Service or Professional or Rich Business Family preferably from TN. Divorcee Widower or First Marriage Caste No Bar. Send all details to 8081104364 (WhatsApp only) No Brokers

PILLAI VEG 41/172cm CEO Pvt London –Parents Chennai seeks UK Professionals /willing to go to UK CNB Geetham 9884858014

HINDU, 23, Canada, Private, ME, Canada, 80 lakhs. Ph: 8138009235.

WE ARE looking for an alliance for our daughter, aged 30 years, residing in Chennai, height 162cm, MBBS, MHA, Aesthetic Medicine, Hindu, Agamudayar, working in a reputed hospital at Chennai as an Administrator. Kumbam–Sadhayam. Looking for Doctor or well settled business back ground groom. Contact 9739070404 / 9282226820 / archdivyagsr@gmail.com

MUDALIAR 25/160 Fair, Beautiful MBBS, MS(OBG)1000000.PA, Well Settled Family, CNB. 9043991629, 9043987029

TAMIL

HINDU, DIVORCED, no kids, 32, BE. Ph: 8137003550

GROOM WANTED Hindu Nadar,25yrs, BE,SWE,1.5L pm, business family Ph:9841329471,9380791999

GROOM WANTED SC (AD), 28yrs,CA, Affluent business family in Chennai Ph: 6369113665

BRIDEGROOM WANTED
VELLALAR PILLAI, Doctor (MBBS) Bride, US Citizen, age 24, height 152 cm, Poosam, Kataka Rasi, currently preparing to join the Residency program in the US, is looking for suitable Doctor bridegroom preferably from VELLALA community living in the US.
Text to Whatsapp no: 94481 16931

HINDU, 26, Mudaliar, Doctor, BSMS, looking for same community. Ph: 8137003549

MUDALIAR DIVORCE, 30, BE, 160cm Good–looking Well settled family Seeks Groom CNB. 8778514465/ 7200866346

BRIDES WANTED

COSMOPOLITAN

EDUCATED BRIDE –35 for Groom RC, Software Engineer,43, Chennai,5ft 8inches /72Kg Never Married, Handsome, Teetotaler Ct.9841293531 / antonbr144@gmail.com

SMART, CHRISTIAN 31, 180cm, enterprising, UK–educated professional. Seeks compatible bride. Religion/ community no bar. Call/WA 9345 634 365

MS, PHD (USA) working in Florida (USA) 180cm, 32 Years Smart, Fair, Thiyya Community seeks USA based compatible bride. Community, Language no bar. Call 9343343888 / WA 9880088333 – Email: deeceecon@yahoo.co.in

KARKATHAR PILLAI 37, 170 cm, fair and handsome, BE (Telecom), Officer Indian Army IT Branch, 30 lacs PA, never married, son of retd army officer looking for affable and well educated girl. Equal and sub caste no bar. 9448307862.

CASTE/ LANGUAGE No Bar, Second Marriage, Pure Veg, 36/165, Bank Manager, Spiritual groom seeks like minded, pure veg, graduate, Spiritual Bride. Ct: 6380938308, 9842211290

HINDI

1985/175CM, 50 Lakhs PA, Never Married, Bangalore. WhatsApp: 96290 12248

MALAYALAM

MALAYALEE NAIR, 31 years, IT professional, well-educated and well-settled in Trichy, seeks a suitable bride from Coimbatore / Trichy / Madurai. Well-mannered and family-oriented background preferred. Contact: 98430 59929

TAMIL

CHRISTIAN NADAR, Doctor, Divorcee 37yrs/178cm, MBBS, Dip in Cardiology better earning lives in Nagercoil seeks qualified/ Divorced Bride. 9003983230

RC 28YRS Er Graduate, MNC, decent salary from Business family. Seeks bride from decent family community no bar details to: dalsingroup@gmail.com / 9840239597

35 M, Divorced, Madurai. Looking for– RC/CSI/Hindu, Without children, Brides from TN. High expectations brides don't call. Ct: 9003437516

TAMIL

HINDU, YADAV, MD, Doctor, 30 lakhs. PH:9048444858

LOOKING FOR bride, My Son earns 15L PA aged 39 H 168cm. Two own house in chennai. mob 9697750005.

BRIDE WANTED Hindu Nadar 30yrs, B.tech, MBA,SWE, 3Lac p/m Elite business family Ct:9841329471/ 9380791999

PILLAI 44 Divorcee M.Com Central Govt service Rs.13.50 lakhs PA seeks bride caste no bar 9094020665

Mudaliyar 54/170 unmarried B.Com Manager- Pvt concern 50K seeks well settled bride. CNB. Ph: 93602 97552

PILLAI, SOZHIA Vellalar 41yrs MBA, Manager, Pvt. 6 Lpa Divorcee, Seeks suitable bride, CNB. Ct: 9952362396

HINDU, 36, divorced, any caste, Doctor, 30 lakhs. Ph: 8138900316

HINDU, NAIDU, 29, MS, USA, 20 crores. Ph: 8138901281

HINDU, NADAR, MBM, 10 crores, UK. Ph: 8137003550

HINDU, 28, Yadav, Doctor, 40 lakhs. Ph: 9072777811

DKV 2nd Marriage 53 / 3.5 LPM Sr. GM B'lore Seeks Issueless Girl CNB 9442607143.

DKV Divorcee 44 / 1.5 LPM DGM PSU Son with Mother Seeks Issueless Girl CNB 8903778148.

WE ARE looking a girl for our son, age 29, BE SWP IT working in Bangalore, 25LPA, Ht.5.8, . The Bride should be working in Bangalore or transferable job but his family in Coimbatore(TN) only and she should hail from a decent, educated family from hindu tamil pillai or mudaliyar, around 24 to 29 years contact : 9442566667

VANNIAR B.TECH Mechatronics,31 Entrepreneur Affluent family.Seek Bride SameComunity.9444453825/94454 29365

HINDU, 31, Masters, 70 lakhs, any caste. Ph: 9048444858

HINDU, 32, Divorced, Thevar, looking from same community in divorced or unmarried. Ph: 9072777811

✔ **MUDALIAR, THIRUVADURAI–MITHUNAM, Sep 95 born, 6.1 ft, B.E–CSE, Sr.Dev. Wipro, 18LPA, H1B Cap appln appvd by USCIS, good character & family, well settled boy, seeks well educated & settled, slim & fair, good character & family girl, Ct/WA 94432 28917**

VANNIYAR S.PRAVEEN Kumar, BE, 1.20/M, Moola Nakshatram, Dhanush Rasi, Ch– 77. Ct:8610711668 / 9884470377

GAVARA NAIDU Affluent family Chennai 29/165 ME Design Engineer in MNC and Own Business, Rental income also, Star Thiruvonam Rasi Magaram, CNB Call 9841097110

SC VANNIAR 31/167 super specialist Doctor Trauma Surgeon JIPMER/ AIIMS Delhi well mannered, seeks suitable Doctor bride. Ct: 9445252124

HINDU OBC 42/158 MScBEd PGT Pvt 50000 /PM Seeks Suitable Bride From Any Caste Ph 7845973648

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BRIDE WANTED

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Contact WhatsApp: 9840671046, Email: vallichinnamani@gmail.com

BRIDE WANTED

40 years, 170 cm, Ayilyam, kadagam, 15 Lacs pm income, Hindu/widower with one male child/Vanniyar, rich & disciplined Graduate from Reputed Family. Knowing English, Tamil, Gujarathi & Hindi. **Seeks Fair bride below 37 years, Unmarried / Divorcee No issues from BC/MBC/FC**

Contact: 9443244060

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TELUGU

NAIDU 32/180 fair MBBS MD (Aero space medicine) Rich & affluent family Chennai. Caste No bar. 9841044646

NAIDU 28/184 Handsome, MBBS, MS, Own Hospital, 5000000.PA, Elite Family, CNB. 9043991629, 9043987029

BRIDES & GROOMS WANTED

TAMIL

ALLIANCE INVITED from a govt employee for my daughter RC NADAR, tamil 32/153 cm, M.E., Spiritual, Vegetarian, wants to be a home maker and also a home maker for my son 30 Clerk SBI. Ct:94422 47012

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KAPU, 41, 173 cms, MBA Finance, Sr Management. Lives in USA. Looking for a like minded match from Telugu match with equalant community. Contact: 6366448343

CHRISTIAN CSI NADAR, 26, 173 cms, MSC and MFBA, Businessman. Lives in Chennai. Family is a financially well off. Looking for a like minded match from Tamil Nadu. Contact: 6366448343

ELITE GROOMS WANTED

NAIDU, 30, 168 cms, Masters in Management. Lives in New Zealand. Family is financially well off. Looking for a like minded match and willing to relocate to other countries. Contact: 6366448343

KAMMA, 27, 155 cms, MBBS and Fellowship. Lives in Chennai. Father is a Businessman. Family is financially well off. Looking for like minded from equivalent Telugu community from Chennai. Contact: 6366448344

TELUGU BRAHMIN VAIDKI, 27, 165 cms, BBA Finance and CFA, Business Analyst. Lives in Dubai. Father is a CFA. Family is financially well off. Looking for a like minded match from similar community. Contact: 6366448344

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TELUGU

GROOM WANTED Kamma Naidu, 28yrs, B.Tech, MBA, Rich and Affluent family in Chennai. Contact: 6385293227

GAVARA NAIDU, 23/Fair, M.Sc.,B.Ed., Business family, running school, seeks well educated any profession or business groom. Contact : 94434 65588.

Naidu Girl 30/165 cm Aswini pursuing PhD Doctoral studies in Satellite Communications Neuromorphic Computing European space agency Europe-completing by Dec 2026 seeking suitable groom PhD / MS in USA. 98401 03686

GROOM FOR my daughter. Sept.95 born. 165 cms. Fair. 24 telugu chetty. B.Tech. Worked for 2 years. Presently not working Coimbatore based. Seeks alliance from same/similar community. Whatsapp. no.8015705614.

NAIDU 24/160 Fair, Beautiful MBBS, SIMS Hospital,1000000.PA, Well Settled Fmly,CNB. 9043991629, 9043987029

GROOM WANTED Rich Naidu,25yrs,B.Tech, MBA (canada), Elite Industrial background Ph:6369113665

URDU

SUNNI MUSLIM girl, 1994 born, 164 cm, B.Tech, never married, working in PSU Bank, Mumbai. Well–educated family from UP; father retired Addl. Director.Seeks suitable match. #9461179587

SMU 32/167 bride MBBS MD, Chennai seeks Doctor/Engineer groom from good family. Whatsapp/Ct:9585547701

TAMIL

CHRISTIAN, 29, Doctor, looking for any caste in doctor profession. Ph: 7356483111

CATHOLIC 27 /173/ BE/ MNC/ Chennai/ Handsome/ Seeks Educated Girl. Contact: 9025608385

RC CHRISTIAN, 43yrs/170, B.E. Software Engineer, never married, works for mnc, Chennai. CT– 9500188067

TAMIL, PURE Vegetarian, 47 State Govt Officer –12L PA. First Marriage. Seek Caste no Bar only Vegetarian. Call/WA – 89037 47433

HINDU, 30, Business, MBM, Elite. PH:8138009235

HINDU, 26, Royale, anycaste, business. PH:9072777811

PILLAI 34 M.Tech Wkg MNC Blr Seeks BrideGood Looking & Working. 30–32yrs,CNB. Ct: 9884104533/ 9840863620

WELL Settled Tamil based Intercaste (SC+Brahmin) Dr Couple, looking for suitable Bride for their Son 32 Yrs (Ragu-Kethu) Dr MD Pathology KMCH, Cbe. Mob: 9842221324, 9894186469.

MUDHALIYAR, CA,24L pa, Age–40, Never married, Kettai, Own House, 6 Acre land, Sub Caste ok. 9677622641 / 9962294842

VANNIYAR, B.SC MBA, 45, Ayilyam, Employed , Brides from same community needed. Ct 9840961251 / 9840708702

AUDITOR/ 46 Chennai/ Seeks Any Vegetarian Hindu Girl. Contact : 9884398109

SEEKING TAMIL Hindu BRIDE for our son, March 1990/173cm, MTech(IIT), MS(US), working in US. Parents intercaste Thevar and Iyengar, Caste No Bar. 96008 65587, sivampankajam@gmail.com

HINDU-TAMIL- BE / SWE / 34yrs / 172CMS / 33LPA / Ayillam -Kadagam . Well educated and settled in Bangalore, financially stable. Looking for suitable Bride from educated family. Contact No: 9845401461.

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BRIDE WANTED Alliance invited from Senior IAS Officer (R) for his Son Sept 1993 born, 178cm, MBA Finance, Premier B School. working in Oil PSU, Mumbai. likely to move to Bangalore. Maharashtrian/ Tamil Parents, Settled in Chennai. Expectation–professionally qualified girl Caste/ Language NO BAR Whatsapp 7305236868

36 YRS, B.Tech mgr govt Bank salary 1.5 LPM owning properties in Ch, Seeking alliance CNB. 9940507235

DIVORCEE

DIVORCE 43, Hindu Govt Gazetted officer, seeks suitable educated bride caste no bar Ct: 63808 39406

SMART, SUCCESSFUL 38, 171cm, progressive US–based professional at global MNC. Seeks educated, compatible S Indian bride. Call/WA 93456 34365

SMART GRACEFUL 51 year old divorcee, No Issues seeking caring partner,also without issues, caste no bar. Contact: 9841672014

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DOCTOR MS Surgeon, RC Catholic Nadar, 32, Divorcee, No children, Tirunelveli seeking Doctor alliance. 9488104192

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IIT Educated Brahmin boy 35/178 settled in Mangalore working in ONGC seeks bride. MP UP Locals preferred. Ct : 7906537840

TAMIL

GROOM WANTED Hindu Nadar,25yrs, BE,SWE,1.5L pm, business family Ph:9841329471,9380791999

GROOM WANTED SC (AD), 28yrs,CA, Affluent business family in Chennai Ph: 6369113665

BRIDEGROOM WANTED
VELLALAR PILLAI, Doctor (MBBS) Bride, US Citizen, age 24, height 152 cm, Poosam, Kataka Rasi, currently preparing to join the Residency program in the US, is looking for suitable Doctor bridegroom preferably from VELLALA community living in the US.
Text to Whatsapp no: 94481 16931

HINDU, 26, Mudaliar, Doctor, BSMS, looking for same community. Ph: 8137003549

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Send updated Resume to E-mail **rkishore@sjps.edu.in**

Interested and eligible candidates can apply to reach us on or before 4th of April 2026. Date of Joining will be 1st of June '26.

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Chairman & Management, SJPS

Malnad villagers fear school merger will further isolate remote places

Sathish G.T.
AGALAGANDI
(CHIKKAMAGALURU)

The Karnataka government's proposal to merge government schools with low enrolment with the closest located Karnataka Public Schools (KPSs) has left people in the villages of the hilly Malnad region worried.

They argue that the impact of closing schools in these remote villages will be greater than in other parts of the State.

The Malnad region is characterised by hamlets scattered over a large area, nestling between hills and in wooded areas. A child has to either walk or travel a couple of kilometers to reach his or her school. A majority of primary schools located in remote areas of Koppa, Sringeri, Mudigere, and N.R. Pura taluks of Chikkamagaluru, as well as those in other Malnad districts, have only a few students enrolled.

"We are worried that in the name of setting up new KPSs, all our rural schools will close by the coming academic year," feared Subramanya Somanakodige, a gram panchayat member and resident of Huligaradi in Sringeri taluk.

Five schools closed

Mr. Somanakodige recalled that in the last seven to eight years, five government primary schools located in Huligaradi, Arehalla, Kolegodu, Halarane, and Kittalegoli in the Agalagandi gram panchayat alone were closed. The children from these schools have either been admitted to residential schools or forced to join private schools in Jayapura or Sringeri.

"A school, particularly in our area, is not just a physical structure. It is the heart of the village, a centre of activities, and a meeting point for the villagers. The role of a school in the region goes beyond providing education for children," he pointed out.

A government school at Heggar-Kudige in Sringeri. Given the nature of the hilly terrain with isolated villages, people of Malnad argue that schools there have to be treated as special cases. SATHISH G.T.

The villages bordering the Kudremukh National Park lack proper roads, transportation facilities, and mobile network coverage.

Many parents in these villages admit their children to residential schools at an early age. As a result, only a few get enrolled in local government schools.

Late arrivals

"In our school, children keep coming even an hour after the bell has rung. However, we allow them in, as these children assist their parents with agricultural work before reaching school," said a government teacher who wished to remain anonymous.

However, if the schools are merged with the KPSs, many students may stop attending school, the teacher feared. The government is contemplating arranging vehicles to pick up and drop off students to reach the schools.

"There will be designated pick-up points. If a child does not reach the pick-up point on time, he or she will miss class that day. We cannot expect the driver to wait for all students to board the vehicle," said the teacher, whose school has 28 students enrolled from Class I to VII.

The higher primary schools at Karemane, Byredevaru, Dayamballi villages in Sringeri taluk with enrollments of 17, 42 and 16, respectively, also face the threat of closure.

The local residents want the School Education Department to treat the Malnad region as a special case and ensure that schools remain open in villages, despite low enrolment.

Teachers' role

"The schools in the region serve as a bridge between the village and the outside world. There are teachers who play the role of guides to the villagers as well," opined Krishnamurthy, a resident of Heggar-Kudige in Sringeri taluk.

HC: KSFC can't ignore guidance value while assessing property

Court declares as illegal methodology adopted by the KSFC, which substantially lowers the value of a property than the guidance value fixed by the State government, when assessing the property for mortgage loan

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a verdict impacting the lending policy of the State-run financial institutions, the High Court of Karnataka has declared as illegal a methodology, adopted by the Karnataka State Financial Corporation (KSFC), which substantially lowers the value of a property than the guidance value fixed by the State government, when assessing the property for mortgage loan.

"The adoption of a valuation methodology by the KSFC, which is entirely detached from the guidance value recognised by the State for statutory purposes, not only creates administrative inconsistency but also results in practical injustice to loan applicants who seek to utilise their

immovable properties as collateral security for obtaining financial assistance," the court observed.

Justice Suraj Govindaraj passed the order while allowing a petition filed by Parwati of Vijayapura district.

Letter quashed

The court quashed a KSFC letter dated February 25, 2021, that had valued her properties offered for mortgage at approximately ₹40.8 lakh, less than one-tenth of its sub-registrar-fixed guidance value of ₹4.73 crore.

Meanwhile, the court directed the KSFC to reassess her loan application by applying guidance value for her property with the help of the jurisdictional sub-registrar. The petitioner, a homemaker, had applied for loan by mortgaging her properties to start a business.

The court rejected the KSFC's contention that the guidance value of the property is only for registration purpose and the financial institution as to use conservative valuation for risk assessment.

The sub-registrar's guidance value holds statutory weight and is used across multiple legal and administrative processes, and hence the KSFC cannot disregard it lightly, the court said.

Also, the court made it clear that the internal valuation methodology in KSFC's lending policy is appropriate only when no guidance value exists or when land remains purely agricultural, but when the sub-registrar has notified a residential or commercial guidance value, that figure should serve as the primary benchmark for assessing property value for lending.

Further, the court said that the KSFC sanctions loans by valuing property at a markedly reduced figure, using its internal formula that relies on the land's agricultural value plus a fixed percentage. Yet, when the same property is mortgaged through a registered instrument, the borrower is compelled to pay stamp duty and registration charges calculated based on the guidance value, which is much higher.

Borrower hit

This disparity, the court said, places the borrower at a clear disadvantage. As a result, the citizen absorbs the financial burden of the higher value without receiving a corresponding benefit in loan sanction, the court pointed out.

While KSFC may retain the discretion to undertake appropriate due diligence and risk assessment in determining the quantum of loan to be sanctioned, such determination cannot proceed on a valuation methodology that is wholly inconsistent with the statutory guidance value recognised by the State itself, the court said.

Priyank hits out at RSS after being 'thanked' for route march row

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Retorting to a Rashtriya Swayamsevek Sangh (RSS) office-bearer who "thanked" him for objecting to their route march, thereby putting the focus on it and boosting participation, IT-BT Minister Priyank Kharge has said the organisation should thank him instead for teaching "the law of the land and how to follow the rules".

Mr. Kharge was responding to a statement made by Kshetriya Karyavah of RSS N. Thippeswamy, who earlier in the week said that the publicity generated by the Congress turned what would have been a regular march in Chittapur (Mr. Kharge's constituency) into big mobilisation.

Bigger numbers

Without referring directly to Mr. Kharge, Mr. Thippeswamy said, "They now know what happens if they come in our way. In Chittapur, we would have got

Priyank Kharge

about 400 to 500 people to assemble. Because of the publicity they gave, around 8,000 assembled without any effort. We should thank them."

The RSS route march in Chittapur in November 2025 had led to a political and legal tussle, with the administration initially denying permission citing law and order concerns. It was eventually held, with riders on timing and number of participation, following a petition in the Karnataka High Court.

Responding to Mr. Thippeswamy's remarks, Mr. Kharge took to X and claimed on Saturday, "Take all available videos, photos, drone footage, and panoramic shots and try to show a gathering of 8,000 people. RSS has a tendency to exaggerate its image and reputation."

He said the organisation was compelled to follow rules such as applying for permission, restricting numbers, sticking to a designated route etc. following the court's orders.

Number of shakhas

Responding to the statement that between 2025 and 2026 Karnataka recorded 4,127 daily shakhas, Mr. Kharge said, "Good to know... Prepare the relevant documents. You will need to register them soon.... Instead of shooting from the shadows, why not engage in a transparent, open debate about RSS's contributions and work? After all, there's a century of claimed selfless service and nation building to showcase."

The RSS has announced that it would do a rehaul of the Karnataka unit by 2027, which happens to be a year ahead of the Assembly elections in the State.

Council Chairman sets March 25 deadline for pending government replies in House

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Legislative Council Chairman Basavaraj Horatti has directed the government to furnish all pending replies by March 25, warning that action will follow the next day if the deadline is not met.

"All answers must be provided by the March 25. If not, action should be taken on the March 26 and the House informed," he said.

HM's assurance

Responding to this in the House earlier in the week, Home Minister G. Parameshwara assured that the

Basavaraj Horatti

government will comply with the direction. He said steps had already been initiated to address delays, including issuing notices to departmental secretaries and warning of suspension in cases of continued negligence. "That can be done," he said.

The issue was raised by JD(S) member S.L. Bhoje Gowda, who flagged the large number of unanswered questions. He said that of the 688 questions raised so far, nearly 400 remained unanswered, with only 288 receiving replies, and sought clarity on whether the backlog would be cleared before the session ends.

Dr. Parameshwara said the matter had been reviewed at the highest level, with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah holding a meeting with the Chief Secretary and Opposition leaders. "Notices have been issued ll Secretaries. If negligence continues, instructions have been given to suspend the officials concerned," he said, adding that some improvement is already visible.

However, Mr. Horatti pressed for stricter enforcement, questioning why action had not yet been taken against erring officials. The Minister reiterated that directions to initiate suspension had already been issued.

A day earlier, Assembly Speaker U.T. Khader adjourned the Assembly and walked out, protesting the failure of departments to provide written replies to questions raised by MLAs, prompting the government to issue fresh directions to Ministers and officials.

Siddaramaiah to inaugurate renovated entrance at Vidhana Soudha on March 25

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will inaugurate the renovated entrance that leads to the Assembly wing at the Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on March 25, Speaker U.T. Khader said here on Saturday.

The Chief Minister will also inaugurate on that day the solar power project which will partially supply electricity to the Vidhana Soudha, he said.

Speaking to presspersons, Mr. Khader said that the entrance has beautiful carvings of Karnataka style and has been developed by Karnataka State Forest Industries Corporation (KSFIC) and the Public Works Department.

The Public Works Department has invited bids to develop the entrance gates near the grand steps of the Vidhana Soudha and from the High Court side. FILE PHOTO

The Public Works Department has invited bids to develop the entrance gates near the grand steps of the Vidhana Soudha and from the High Court side, he said.

To a question on the construction of a shelter for stray dogs on the Vidhana Soudha premises, he said, "The government itself has to take the final decision on it. We have submitted our views and plans to the State government."

During the BJP government's time, the then Speaker K.G. Bopaiah had renovated the Assembly hall by undertaking civil, electrical, and installation of audio-video systems. The occasion to undertake the task was the diamond jubilee celebrations of the Legislative Assembly in 2012.

Cambrian Skillsda aces cybersecurity challenge

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The challenge, launched in January 2025, aims to strengthen India's cybersecurity capabilities

Cambrian Skillsda Technologies and Consultancy Services LLP (CSTCS), a startup based at the Cambridge Institute of Technology (CIT), Bengaluru, has emerged winner of the Cyber Security Grand Challenge 2.0, organised by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology in association with the Data Security Council of India.

The startup received a cash prize of ₹1 crore along with a trophy.

The challenge, launched in January 2025 on the MyGov platform, aims to strengthen India's cyber security capabilities and encourage innovation in critical technology domains such as API security, data security, wearable device security and privacy, clone and fake app mitigation, AI for threat detection, incident response and next-generation biometric systems.

'No move to hand over PU education to ZPs'

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Primary and Secondary Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa has informed Members of the Legislative Council (MLCs) from Teachers' and Graduates' constituencies that the government is not considering any proposal to transfer the administration of the Pre-University (PU) Education Department to zilla panchayats.

Responding to concerns raised by legislators, the Minister categorically ruled out any such move, effectively putting to rest growing apprehensions among government PU college lecturers and staff across the State.

MLCs and others with Primary and Secondary Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa.

The government's move to transfer the functions and co-ordination powers of the Deputy Directors of Pre-University of (DDPUs) of School Education Department (Pre-Univeristy) at district level, to the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of zilla panchayats has been strongly opposed by lecturers, principals and other staff of government PU colleges.

Welcoming the clarification, office-bearers of the PU lecturers' and principals' associations expressed gratitude to the Minister for addressing their concerns and those raised by legislators. They later met and felicitated him for his stand on the issue.

MLCs K. Vivekananda, Bhojegowda, and Puttanna were present, along with State president of the PU Lecturers' Association Ningegowda and State Principals' Association President Eregowda.

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Admission Notice: 2026-27

1. Online Registration for Admission in Class-I in PM SHRI Kendriya Vidyalaya, Mandya for the Academic Year 2026-27 has started from 10:00 am on **20.03.2026** and will close on **02.04.2026 by 11:59 pm.** The details of admissions are available on website https: //kvsangathan.nic.in/en/admission/, https://mandya.kvs.ac.in. Link to apply for Class 1: https: //admission.kvs.gov.in
2. Minimum age for admission in Class-I will be 6 years. Reckoning of age for all Classes shall be as on 31.03.2026. Reservation of seats will be as per KVS Admission Guidelines 2026-27.
3. Registration for fresh admissions, in, Class II to V, is from **20.03.2026 at 10:00 am** to **02.04.2026 up to 04:00 pm**, **in offline mode only**. The duly filled up form needs to be submitted to the office of the Principal PM SHRI KV Mandya.
4. All informations regarding Admission & Registration forms for Class-II to V, will be available on the Websites https://kvsangathan.nic.in/en/admission/, https://mandya.kvs.ac.in and registrations can be done as per the Schedule for Admission 2026-27.
5. Admission will not be granted, if wrong and misleading informations in the application form is found at the time of scrutiny by the KV.
6. Contact Principal / Admission In-charge, during office hours only.

Sd/- PRINCIPAL

INBRIEF

Revanth to release first Rythu Bharosa instalment today

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy will inaugurate an oil palm processing factory at Narmeta in Siddipet district on Sunday and simultaneously credit first instalment of Rythu Bharosa scheme. He will release ₹3,590 crore as the first instalment into bank accounts of 70 lakh farmers with up to one acre of land. The second instalment of ₹2,650 crore will be released on April 9 or 10. The balance ₹2,860 crore will be credited before the end of April.

Lorry gutted after it touches high-tension wire; drivers safe

A major disaster was narrowly averted after a lorry transporting firecrackers caught fire after coming in contact with a high-tension electricity wire at Kothur on the Hyderabad city outskirts on Saturday. The lorry was carrying a consignment of crackers from Sivakasi in Tamil Nadu. Both drivers, identified as Ayyapan and Sattivel, managed to jump out of the vehicle and escaped. A fire engine was pressed into service and the fire was brought under control. While there was no loss of life, the lorry was completely gutted.

Illegal samosa-making unit unearthed in Hyderabad

A 73-year-old man was held after the Hyderabad police Task Force uncovered an illegal samosa manufacturing unit operating under highly unhygienic conditions in Jiyaguda, seizing food stock and equipment worth an estimated ₹5 lakh.

The accused, identified as Abdul Rasheed, was running the unit without mandatory clearances, including an FSSAI licence, trade licence, or fire safety certification.

CPI(M) dissident to contest as Independent with Cong. help

Former Kerala Minister Sudhakaran files papers from Ambalappuzha and is set to face ruling party candidate; he accepts UDF's unconditional support and plans to take part in its roadshow

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

G. Sudhakaran files his nomination papers at the Alappuzha District Collectorate on Saturday. SURESH ALLEPPEY

CPI(M) dissident and former Kerala Minister G. Sudhakaran crossed the political Rubicon and dared the ruling Left Democratic Front (LDF) in its home turf by filing his nomination as a "people's Independent" in the Ambalappuzha Assembly constituency in Alappuzha district on Saturday.

Mr. Sudhakaran had broken his six-decade-old association with the party alleging discrimination, after he was not given a term waiver – but accorded to other leaders – for contesting the upcoming Assembly polls. His decision to contest as Independent has set the stage for a riveting electoral battle with his one-time protege H. Salam of the CPI(M).

As chance would have it, Mr. Salam ran into Mr. Sudhakaran, his erstwhile mentor-turned-bitter critic, at the district Collectorate. Both leaders shook hands and wished each other well.

Mr. Sudhakaran arrived at the Collectorate from his residence in the company of scores of Congress workers. He had initially said he would go the whole hog alone and required no roadshows, election conventions or booth committees.

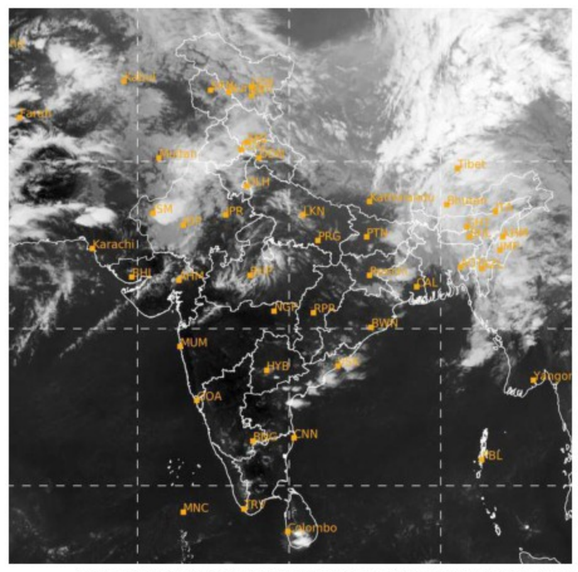
Later, Mr. Sudhakaran accepted the unconditional support of the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF), which appeared keen to discomfit the CPI(M) in its home turf. He is scheduled to participate in a UDF roadshow and attend an election meeting chaired by AICC general secretary K.C. Venugopal, MP.

Leader of the Opposition V.D. Satheesan had termed Mr. Sudhakaran's "defection" a UDF-orchestrated "miracle."

The UDF believed that Mr. Sudhakaran's candidature would help split LDF votes in Alappuzha. The CPI(M) appeared confident that its organisational strength would see it to victory. The sidelining of party hopefuls for Mr. Sudhakaran sparked a rebellion in the Congress, with former KPCC general secretary M.J. Job and his loyalists defecting to the BJP.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.45 HRS)

Forecast for Sunday: Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning/ gusty winds likely at isolated places over Rajasthan, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Sikkim, West Bengal, Odisha and Karnataka. Hot and humid weather likely at isolated places over coastal Karnataka, Kerala and Mahe

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	10	26.2	18.9	Kozhikode	—	35.6	25.2
Ahmedabad	—	34.2	18.2	Kurnool	—	38.4	24.6
Aizawl	13.1	25.6	16.1	Lucknow	22	25.9	17.2
Allahabad	1	28.2	15.0	Madurai	—	37.4	25.1
Bengaluru	—	32.6	21.5	Mangaluru	—	33.8	23.4
Bhopal	0.4	29.4	14.3	Mumbai	—	33.9	20.1
Bhubaneswar	—	33.2	21.2	Mysuru	—	33.4	18.6
Chandigarh	10	25.1	9.6	New Delhi	1	27.4	13.0
Chennai	—	34.2	25.1	Patna	7.7	24.7	18.7
Coimbatore	—	35.4	22.8	Port Blair	—	31.6	24.2
Dehradun	27.5	26.3	10.7	Puducherry	—	32.9	25.6
Gangtok	26	10.2	8.6	Pune	—	35.4	21.0
Goa	—	34.4	22.6	Raipur	0.2	32.8	19.7
Guwahati	2	25.8	19.1	Ranchi	—	26.4	19.0
Hubballi	—	34.0	21.0	Shillong	—	19.3	12.5
Hyderabad	—	34.0	22.6	Shimla	38	15.8	3.6
Imphal	4	26.1	15.0	Srinagar	0.9	17.9	6.3
Jaipur	—	28.6	16.7	Thiruvananthapuram	—	35.0	25.2
Kochi	—	32.2	25.8	Tiruchi	—	36.3	25.0
Kohima	—	21.9	13.0	Vijayawada	—	37.4	23.8
Kolkata	10	26.0	20.0	Visakhapatnam	4	32.0	21.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.88	101	29	78	130	
Bengaluru	5	17	40	85	134	
Chennai	.17	.10	32	20	40	
Delhi	.19	.36	54	251	114	
Hyderabad	.14	.13	33	62	83	
Kolkata	.12	.33	44	36	45	
Lucknow	.11	.38	45	80	112	
Mumbai	.11	.81	.4	50	87	
Pune	.—	.77	49	96	105	
Visakhapatnam	.21	.52	16	28	61	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Angul, Odisha recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 305 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Pampore, Jammu & Kashmir recorded a healthy AQI score of 14

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Five family members found dead in Kochi

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

Five members of a family, including three children, were found dead at Vaduthala in Kochi on Saturday in a suspected case of suicide-murder.

The deceased are Y. Sreekumari, 59, her daughter Aswathy S. Nair, 37, and Aswathy's sons aged 14 and five, and a two-year-old daughter. The police suspect that the women poisoned the children before hanging them. A suicide note, allegedly by Aswathy, was found.

(Those in distress could seek help by calling DISHA - 1056, 0471-2552056, and Maithri - 0484-2540530)

Vandana Das murder: life term for convict

The Hindu Bureau
KOLLAM

The Kollam Additional Sessions Court on Saturday delivered the judgment in the Dr. Vandana Das murder case, sentencing the convict, G. Sandeep, to life imprisonment along with an additional 32 years of rigorous imprisonment under various sections of the Indian Penal Code.

Judge P.N. Vinod specified that the convict must serve 20 years of jail terms before his life imprisonment sentence even begins, ensuring that he stays in jail for the remainder of his life. The court imposed a total fine of ₹2.35 lakh on the convict.

Man held for sexually harassing Kerala actor

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

A 27-year-old man has been arrested on Friday by the Palarivattom police in Kochi for allegedly stalking and sexually harassing a Malayalam actor. The accused has been identified as Jithin Roy, an IT employee.

He allegedly misbehaved with her near Kaloor on Thursday night. He was arrested based on a complaint from the woman. According to sources, the man, who claimed to be a fan of the actor, used to stalk her on social media.

Confabulations

Congress in-charge for Karnataka Randeep Singh Surjewala, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar and other leaders at a meeting on choosing the party candidate for the upcoming Davangere South Assembly byelection in Bengaluru on Saturday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Fuel crisis hits hospitality sector and migrant workers in Kerala

Dhinesh Kallungal
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

With restaurants shutting down amid fuel shortage and dwindling patronage, Kerala's once-buoyant hospitality industry, which has been dominated by Chinese and Arab cuisines of late, is slipping into distress.

The fallout has triggered a temporary reverse migration, with a significant number of migrant workers returning to their home States, several of which are headed for elections. However, whether jobs will be available when they return to Kerala remains an open question, given the global supply chain disruptions caused by the West Asian crisis.

A delegation led by the Kerala Hotel and Restaurant Association (KHRA) has met the Commissioner of Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs seeking urgent intervention to ensure that commercial establishments which use LPG can remain open and to prevent migrant workers from returning to their home States.

According to G. Jayapal, State president of KHRA, nearly 70% of eateries have shut down operations, while the remaining 30% are functioning with restricted hours and paredown menus due to the fuel shortage.

"We had requested the government to provide at least 40% of each hotelier's average fuel consumption during this period. However, the State is yet to take a decision on even supplying 20% of the sector's average requirement. This has forced many establishments to send workers home, as owners cannot keep them on payrolls for weeks without work," Mr. Jayapal said.

The issue gains further significance considering that Kerala is home to around 31.4 lakh migrant workers, according to a 2017-18 study.

Adopt latest technology at TTD temples for hassle-free pilgrimage, says Naidu

The Hindu Bureau
TIRUMALA

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu arrives at Tirumala on Friday as part of his two-day visit . SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday underscored the need for transforming the temples under the aegis of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) into state-of-the-art spiritual centres, blending tradition with cutting-edge technology to enhance the pilgrim experience.

Reviewing the operations of the Artificial Intelligence-enabled Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) at the Vaikuntham Queue Complex, Mr. Naidu emphasised the importance of proactive governance in ensuring a seamless and hassle-free pilgrimage. He directed the officials to further strengthen systems capable of anticipating potential inconveniences to devotees and addressing them in real time. He stressed that the ICCC must monitor every stage of a pilgrim's journey – from entry into queue lines to the completion of darshan and departure – ensuring the highest standards of service.

Earlier, the officials made a detailed presentation on the ICCC's capabilities, highlighting the use of AI to forecast pilgrim footfall and optimise resource allocation. They also explained the integrated monitoring of laddu preparation, distribution and inventory management.

Mr. Naidu called for the deployment of advanced surveillance infrastructure, including CCTV cameras and facial recognition systems, to safeguard the sanctity of Tirumala and prevent activities that could undermine its spiritual ambience. Officials informed him that such systems were already in vogue and further efforts would be made to secure the latest gadgets.

Highlighting the need for sustainable development, he directed authorities to adopt stringent steps to keep Tirumala pollution-free and explore the construction of additional temples. He noted the success of welfare initiatives such as Annadanam and Pranadanam, and urged the expansion of the latter to provide enhanced medical services to devotees.

Land encroachers out, Nilgiri tahrs in

Once a hub of encroachers, Chokramudi hills are now a thriving habitat for Nilgiri tahrs and Neelakurinji; govt. had reclaimed the land after residents protested against illegal construction

The Hindu Bureau
IDUKKI

In 2024, the Chokramudi hills under Bison Valley panchayat near Munnar in Idukki, Kerala, were known primarily as a hub of encroachers. However, just two years later, the landscape has been transformed into a thriving natural habitat for the endangered Nilgiri tahrs.

The crisis began when an Adimaly native purchased 14.69 acres of land in the ecologically fragile Chokramudi hills, attempting to divide and sell the land into over 60 plots. The encroacher constructed an illegal road, felled numerous trees, and built a check dam on the hillside. In protest, downstream residents of Bison Valley formed the "Chokramudi Protection Council".

Safe home: A Nilgiri tahr at the Chokramudi hills near Munnar in Idukki district of Kerala. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Two Special Investigation Teams –one led by K. Sethuraman, former Director of the Police Training College, and another by Devikulam Subcollector – uncovered large-scale encroachment of government land and the massive destruction of Neelakurinji plants.

Following these reports, the Revenue Department cancelled the 13.69 acres of land's title deeds in March 2025 and reclaimed the area. By August 2025, authorities cancelled the title deed for an additional 1.05 acres and seized a resort built on the encroached land. Since the government takeover, the absence of unregulated tourism has allowed nature to rebound.

Botanist Jomy Augustine said that the hills have become an active habitat for the Nilgiri tahrs and Neelakurinji. "The climate and grasslands here are most favourable for the tahr," he said. The hills are set to witness a massive flowering of Neelakurinji.

From Page One

Trump mulls ending war, eases curbs on oil

"IRGC pounded the facilities of the two Al-Minhad [UAE] and Ali Al-Salem [Kuwait] air bases, the hangars, and the fuel depots of American-Zionist aircraft with a massive volume of ballistic missiles and suicide drones. These bases were the origin of the aggression against #IranianIslands," Mr. Tangsiri said in a post on Saturday.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said in a statement, "By temporarily unlocking this existing supply for the world, the U.S. will quickly bring approximately 140 million barrels of oil to global markets, expanding the amount of worldwide energy and helping to relieve the temporary pressures on supply caused by Iran." "This temporary, short-term authorization is strictly limited to oil that is already in transit and does not allow new purchases or production."

The U.S. and Israel have carried out thousands of air strikes in Iran since they started the war on February 28. At least 1,400 people have been killed, including Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and its Security Council Secretary Ali Larijani. Mr. Trump has repeatedly claimed that the U.S.-Israeli strikes have destroyed Iran's military capabilities.

Iran's continuing attacks

Despite such claims, Iran has consistently carried out missile and drone attacks against Israel and America's Persian Gulf Arab allies, besides taking control of the Strait of Hormuz through which one-fifth of the world's traded oil passed before the war. The attacks on oil facilities in the Gulf and the closure of the Strait have driven up oil, gas, and fertilizer prices. Brent crude closed at $106 a barrel on Friday, up from $72 on February 28, the first day of the war.

PM speaks with Iran President Pezeshkian

The Embassy of Iran issued a press note about the phone call and said President Pezeshkian "underscored that the prerequisite for ending the war and conflict in the region is the immediate cessation of aggressions by the U.S. and Israel, along with guarantees against their recurrence in the future." He also expressed his country's "readiness to engage in both telephone and in-person dialogues with world leaders, including on the sidelines of the UN" for verification of the peaceful intent of Iran's nuclear programme and described U.S.-Israel attacks on Iran as "profoundly inhumane and unethical". He also proposed the creation of a "regional security framework" which will be composed of countries of West Asia and will be free of "foreign interference". President Pezeshkian referred to India's current presidency of BRICS and urged for the group to "play an independent role in halting aggressions against Iran and in safeguarding regional and international peace and stability".

Earlier, Prime Minister Modi had spoken to Mr. Pezeshkian on March 12 when he had pressed for giving space to diplomacy to resolve the crisis and had emphasised the need for safety and security of Indian nationals in the Arab states of the region, as well as in Iran.

India has so far evacuated around 882 Indian businessmen, students and pilgrims from Iran through neighbouring Armenia and Azerbaijan, said Official Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal on March 20. However, the main escalating fallout of this conflict for India has been the issue of energy insecurity because of Iran's tightening chokehold across the Strait of Hormuz, which is not allowing free movement of energy-carrying tankers to India, as well as growing concern for the safety of Indian sailors in dozens of Indian and global merchant navy ships that are stuck inside the Gulf.

India is also concerned about the fatalities among its nationals in tankers as well as cities in the Gulf states, where millions of Indians work as expat blue and white-collar workers. The latest fatality was recorded on March 18 in Saudi capital Riyadh where an Indian man was killed because of an Iranian missile strike that pushed up the number of Indians killed in this conflict so far to six, with one missing and presumed to be dead.

Union govt. removes cap on airfares after 3 months

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Centre has withdrawn air fare caps that were introduced in December to curb spike in ticket prices after IndiGo's widespread flight cancellations.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation said in an order dated March 21, "The prevailing situation has since stabilised, with restoration of capacity and normalisation of operations across the sector, upon review, it has been decided that the fare cap imposed vide the aforesaid letter shall stand withdrawn with effect from 23rd March, 2026."

The decision comes at a time airlines are hit hard by the conflict in West Asia leading to increase in aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices as well as flight cancellations and reroutings that burn more fuel and are costlier.

The Ministry, however, said that airlines must ensure pricing discipline. "Airlines shall ensure that fares remain reasonable, transparent and commensurate with market conditions, and that passenger interests are not adversely impacted."

It also warned of regulatory action, including reintroduction of fare caps if there was an unjustified surge in fares.

Centre boosts commercial LPG supply to States by 20%

States to start getting half of their monthly commercial cooking gas requirements from tomorrow; all LPG consumers must apply for PNG to access revised commercial LPG allocation, says directive

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Offering further respite to commercial establishments seeking liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) has decided to allocate States and U.T.s an additional 20% of their average monthly requirement of commercial LPG. Thus, with the additional allocation, States and U.T.s would be able to avail about 50% of their monthly commercial requirements, though subject to distributed requirements.

"I wish to now inform that with effect from 23.03.26 till further notification, another 20% is being allotted to the State[s] that would take the overall allocation to 50% of the pre-crisis level," the MoPNG's letter read.

The additional quantum is to be allocated on priority basis to restaurants, dhabas, hotels, industrial canteens, food processing units and dairies, subsidised canteens and outlets run privately or by State governments, and community kitchens, as well as 5 kg free trade LPG for migrant labourers. The Ministry also directed placing measures to ensure there are no diversions.

Back to basics: As LPG shortages force several restaurants to operate on curtailed menus, hotel staff at a resort in Araku, Andhra Pradesh, cook with firewood on Saturday. K.R. DEEPAK

Pushing PNG transition

The directive also mandates all commercial and industrial LPG consumers must apply for piped natural gas (PNG) with a city gas distribution (CGD) entity and scale a "state of readiness for receiving PNG" before they can be allotted any commercial LPG from the revised allocation.

The Centre has recently begun encouraging a transition to PNG, seeking to alleviate some pressure from LPG supplies mired in the Persian Gulf amidst escalating tensions in West Asia. India imports 60% of its overall LPG requirements, of which 90% is routed through the blockaded Strait of Hormuz.

Earlier, on March 18, the government had pledged to allocate an extra 10% of commercial LPG requirements to States and Union Territories provided they help with the transition to PNG.

City gas distributors have also offered to incentivise the move by waiving security deposits and registration charges, or even promising ₹500-worth of free gas to consumers.

"The supply of LPG continues to be a "concern in view of prevailing geopolitical situation," according to the statement issued on Saturday. "Despite this war situation, government has given highest priority to Domestic LPG and PNG, along with high priority to hospitals and educational institutions," it added.

According to government data from Friday, the domestic production of LPG by refineries has risen about 40% compared to their production levels before the crisis, ever since supply maintenance orders mandated that refineries use propane, butene and other relevant streams to produce cooking gas, instead of petrochemicals.

Refiners in India may restart buying oil from Iran

Reuters
NEW DELHI/SINGAPORE

Indian refiners plan to resume buying Iranian oil while refiners elsewhere in Asia are examining such a move after Washington temporarily removed sanctions to alleviate an energy crunch caused by the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran, traders said on Saturday.

Three Indian refining sources said they will buy Iranian oil and are awaiting government directions and clarity from Washington on details such as payment terms.

Refiners in India, which has much smaller crude stockpiles than other big Asian oil importers, rushed to book Russian oil after the U.S. recently lifted sanctions temporarily. The Indian government could not be immediately reached for comment outside office hours.

The Trump administration on Friday issued a 30-day sanctions waiver for the purchase of Iranian oil already at sea, U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said.

About 170 million barrels of Iranian crude are at sea, said Emmanuel Belostrino, Kpler's senior manager for crude oil market data, on ships scattered from the West Asia Gulf to the waters near China.

Ensure no genuine voter is struck off electoral rolls: parliamentary panel to EC

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

A Parliamentary Standing Committee has asked the Election Commission to ensure that no genuine elector is excluded from the voters' lists or subjected to undue hardship during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), which has concluded in many States and will begin in others soon.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice in its report tabled in Parliament this week, has said that the revision of electoral rolls should be carried out in a fair, transparent and inclusive manner. It has sought adequate safeguards for vulnerable sections, including senior citizens, persons with disabilities, economically weaker sections, and migrant populations.

The committee's recommendations come even as political parties in many States such as West Bengal have raised questions about the entire process and made allegations that the names of many genuine voters were deleted. While the SIR process has been completed in 11 States and Union Territories, the EC has asked 22 other States to begin preparations for the exercise.

A voter checks his name in the list after the EC published West Bengal's post-SIR electoral rolls.

The final electoral list of Uttar Pradesh is scheduled to be out in April. In West Bengal, names of around 60.06 lakh voters, whose details had "logical discrepancies", are under adjudication by judicial officers. Those names cleared by the officers will be added to the voters' list by way of a supplementary list.

Monitoring mechanism

The report submitted in Parliament on March 16 said, "The committee takes note of the proposed house-to-house verification by booth-level officers and the uploading of relevant documents on ECINET [Election Commission Integrated Network] with restricted access, as well as the involvement of political parties through booth-level agents."

It therefore, recommends that the EC put in place robust monitoring mechanisms at all levels to ensure uniform implementation of the revision process, while also ensuring adherence to data privacy and security protocols in respect of documents uploaded on ECINET.

Activists reject 'inhumane' transgender Act changes

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

On Saturday, over 100 members of feminist and lawyer groups wrote an open letter to MPs, appealing to them to reject the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026. They termed it "unconstitutional" as it seeks to introduce "inhumane requirements", which will make access to fundamental rights impossible for many transgender persons.

Last week, the Centre introduced a Bill to amend the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, which takes away the transgender people's "right to self-perceived gender identity", and alters the definition of a "transgender person".

The letter was written by All-India Feminist Alliance, a collective of grassroots organisations; and the National Alliance for Justice, Accountability and Rights, a forum of lawyers and legal professionals.

Media bodies slam 'excessive force' used during UNI sealing

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Media bodies on Saturday condemned the alleged use of "excessive force" while evicting journalists from the United News of India (UNI) premises in Delhi, which was vacated and sealed on Friday following a court order.

The Press Club of India (PCI) urged the authorities to take prompt action against those responsible for the "manhandling of journalists" while they were at work.

In a statement, the Editors Guild of India (EGI) condemned the use of "excessive force", as well as "the undue haste" shown in implementing a High Court directive.

"While the Guild does not question the need to implement the High Court's order, what is disturbing is the lack of due process, and the manifestly excessive display of force by the authorities in executing the court's direction," said the EGI.

Noting that as per reports, the order was pronounced in court around 1.30 p.m. on Friday, the Guild said even before it was uploaded on the court's website, a large number of police and paramilitary personnel arrived at the UNI's premises.

The journalists alleged that no notice was shown to them and that some staff, including women journalists, were manhandled during the eviction process, a charge the Delhi Police have denied.

The Guild said: "The alacrity with which the authorities reacted, as well as the overwhelming display of force, sends a chilling message to the media. The action has not only halted the dissemination of news to UNI's subscribers, but has also cast a shadow over the future of the organisation, and the careers of hundreds of journalists."

The High Court had, on Friday, upheld the cancellation of the land allotment made to UNI at Rafi Marg in New Delhi.

Why is govt. hesitant to take a position on U.S.-Israel air strikes on Iran, asks Cong.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday condemned the Narendra Modi-led government for its failure to condemn the United States-Israel air strikes on Iran for the past three weeks, which have resulted in economic disruptions.

Jairam Ramesh

Congress communications chief Jairam Ramesh's long social media post on X comes days after the party's Lok Sabha member Shashi Tharoor, in an opinion piece, seemed to have taken a more nuanced stance on the government position.

"Has the Modi Govt condemned or criticised or deplored the launch of the heavy aerial assault on Iran by the U.S. and Israel that has now led to severe economic dislocations everywhere including India? The answer is NO," Mr. Ramesh said in a post on X.

He further claimed that New Delhi had remained silent on the targeted killings of senior Iranian leaders and attempts to bring about regime change in Iran.

The Congress leader also questioned whether the government had undertaken any significant diplomatic initiatives to de-escalate the situation or to push for a ceasefire, including engagement with the leadership of the U.S. and Israel.

"Has the PM used his much-claimed friendship with the US President and the Israeli PM to bring about a cease-fire? The answer is NO. These 4 NOs reflect the moral cowardice and political betrayal of India's civilisational values," Mr. Ramesh said.

His assertion was in contrast with Mr. Tharoor's article that said for "a government to recognise geopolitical realities and weigh consequences for India's economy and strategic position before taking a public stand is not moral surrender".

"It is responsible statecraft," Mr. Tharoor wrote.

Nitish Kumar skips *namaz* at Patna's Gandhi Maidan for first time in 20 years

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

For the first time in 20 years of his tenure as Chief Minister of Bihar, Nitish Kumar did not turn up at Patna's Gandhi Maidan where a large number of people gathered for *namaz* on the occasion of Id.

Mr. Kumar has never given a miss to the mass prayers where more than 20,000 people gather at the ground every year for Id. The move is being seen as a reflection of the changing political scenario in Bihar with Mr. Kumar's impending exit from State politics after being elected to the Rajya Sabha.

Nitish Kumar participates in Khanqah Bargah-e-Ishq on the occasion of Id at Takiya Sharif in Mittan Ghat, Patna, on Saturday. CMO BIHAR

Son in the limelight

He deputed his son Nishant Kumar, who joined the Janata Dal (United) recently, to visit the place and interact with the people celebrating the festival.

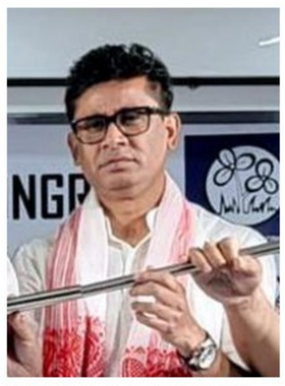
However, Mr. Nitish Kumar had earlier in the day posted a message on X in which he congratulated the Muslim community. "Heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to the people of the State and the country, and especially to our Muslim brothers and sisters, on the occasion of Eid. May God shower his blessings upon us on this auspicious day, and may happiness, peace, and prosperity prevail in the State," the Chief Minister said in the post.

Sources in the party said that it was a political move to put his son in the limelight to mingle with the Muslim community who had gathered in large numbers at the ground.

Trinamool's first list for Assam has 17 names

The Trinamool Congress announced the first list of 17 candidates for the upcoming elections to the 126-member Assam Assembly, with its State senior vice-president Dulu Ahmed among the key nominees.

The National People's Party (NPP) also fielded candidates in three seats, including AIUDF MLA Aminul Islam, who had switched sides recently. Mr. Islam will contest from his constituency Mankachar. The two other NPP candidates are Daniel Langthasa from Haflong and Ganseng B. Sangma from Boko-Chaygaon. Trinamool's Ahmed will fight from the Chamaria constituency. Other candidates from Trinamool include Udangsri Narzary (Kokrajhar), Mominur Islam (Bilasipara), Kaushik Ranjan Das (Abhayapuri), and Kalyani Kalita (Bajali). PTI



Dulu Ahmed from Trinamool Congress will fight from the Chamaria constituency.

Congress fields son of a BJP leader in Assam

The Congress has fielded the son of a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader in southern Assam's Hailakandi constituency. Rahul Roy, a former MLA, did not leave the Congress after his father and former Minister, Gautam Roy, crossed over to the BJP ahead of the 2021 election.

Both lost — the former from Udharbond and the latter from the Katigorah seat. The junior Mr. Roy, who contested the 2021 election as an Independent, is the Congress candidate from the Hailakandi constituency this time. He featured in the party's fourth list of candidates for seven seats in the State, including Naoboicha, where Joy Prakash Das has replaced the incumbent Bharat Narah. Rahul Roy is the second Congress candidate with a BJP leader in the family.

"We want the BJP to come to power in West Bengal. RPI (A) is considering not fielding any candidate in Bengal and supporting the BJP

RAMDAS ATHAWALE
RPI (A) chief

4 LDF Ministers declare assets of ₹2 crore each

Several LDF Ministers contesting in the upcoming April 9 Assembly polls in Kerala on Saturday declared assets of close to ₹2 crore each in their nomination papers. The Ministers include K.N. Balagopal, V. Sivankutty and P.A. Mohamed Riyas among others. PTI

"There is unity among the Opposition in Upper Assam, so I am optimistic that a Congress-led government will be formed in the State

GAURAV GOGOI
Congress leader

Mamata Banerjee holds a child on the occassion of Id, in Kolkata while, right, Suvendu Adhikari offers prayers at Kalighat Kali Temple on Friday. PTI

Mamata targets Modi; Suvendu raises Hindutva pitch in Bengal

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Major political parties in poll-bound West Bengal on Saturday used the Id-ul-Fitr festivities to advance their electoral narrative and target their political opponents. Like every year, Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress chairperson Mamata Banerjee participated in the Id-ul-Fitr prayers on Kolkata's Red Road, where she targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"When you go abroad, you shake hands with leaders and speak of friendship. That is your choice, and I respect all countries. But when you return to India, suddenly the Hindu-Muslim narrative begins, and people are called infiltrators," Ms. Banerjee said, targeting Mr. Modi. She called the Prime Minister and his government the "biggest infiltrator".

Ms. Banerjee said that she would resist any attempt to take away voting rights. "We will not allow Modi *ji* and the BJP to take away your voting rights. We will fight till the end," she said, addressing the gathering.

Over the past few months, the Chief Minister has criticised the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the State.

Later in the day, the Chief Minister visited certain neighbourhoods of the city such as Collin Lane, Ripon Street, and Beck Bagan, where she interacted with residents on the occasion of Id-ul-Fitr.

"I remain deeply concerned about the ongoing challenges faced by many citizens regarding their rightful place in the electoral rolls. I have approached the appropriate legal forums, including the Hon'ble courts, with the hope that the constitutional rights of every individual will be protected," she said in a statement on social media.

Since 2011, when the Trinamool Congress came to power, Muslims, who comprise about 27% of the State's electorate, have supported the party.

Prayed for sanatanis: Suvendu

On the day the Chief Minister participated in Id festivities, Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari offered prayers at the Kalighat temple in the city.

Raising the Hindutva pitch, Mr. Adhikari said that he prayed for the well-being of 'sanatanis' and that there is no attack on Hindus and their places of worship. The BJP leader also said that he prayed that there is no recurrence of incidents like the rape and murder at R.G. Kar Hospital.

"Anyone who calls the Prime Minister of the country an infiltrator does not deserve to hold a constitutional post. I think she has lost her mind, she should visit Ranchi (referring to the mental health facility in Ranchi) immediately," Mr. Adhikari said.

The LOP, who is contesting against the Chief Minister in the Bhabanipur Assembly constituency, claimed that Ms. Banerjee would not win the seat. Instead, she should try her luck from the minority-dominated Metiabruz in Kolkata, he said.

Mr. Adhikari has started campaigning in Bhabanipur and the Chief Minister will start her campaign after Id.

Ms. Banerjee, who spoke about "divisive forces" seeking to "fracture our social fabric" in the evening, visited a temple. "Smt. Mamata Banerjee offered her prayers at Maa Bagalamukhi Temple, seeking the divine blessings of the Mother Goddess for the continued protection and well-being of the Maa, Mati, Manush of Bengal," the Trinamool Congress posted on social media.

Regional issues remain crucial amid 'Gandhi factor' in Wayanad's politics

Despite Rahul Gandhi's 2019 Lok Sabha victory, the UDF won only four of seven Wayanad Assembly segments in 2021 with slimmer margins; key regional issues, including tribal development, corruption allegations, landslide recovery and human-wildlife conflict, seem to drive voter behaviour

IN FOCUS

Sam Paul A.
KOZHIKODE

The Gandhi siblings have redrawn the map of Wayanad's electoral politics. What was once a quiet Lok Sabha seat came into the national spotlight in 2019, when Congress leader Rahul Gandhi chose it as his second constituency, after Amethi in Uttar Pradesh.

He won decisively, defeating P.P. Suneer of the Communist Party of India (CPI) by over 4.31 lakh votes, and securing the highest margins across all seven Assembly segments – Mananthavady, Sulthan Bathery, and Kalpetta in Wayanad district; Eranad, Nilambur, and Wandoor in Malappuram; and Thiruvambadi in Kozhikode.

Despite the Rahul Gandhi wave of 2019, the CPI (Marxist)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) managed to win three – Mananthavady, Thiruvambadi, and Nilambur – of the seven segments in the 2021 Assembly election.

In the remaining Assembly constituencies where the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) won, Mr. Gandhi's leads had been reduced considerably.

Lower victory margins

In Kalpetta, Mr. Gandhi had held a lead of 63,754 votes in the Lok Sabha election, but Congress nominee T. Siddique's victory margin in the Assembly election fell to 5,470. In Wandoor, Congress candidate A.P. Anilkumar's margin was reduced to 15,563, where Mr. Gandhi had held an advantage of 69,555 votes. I.C. Balakrishnan's victory margin in Sulthan Bathery was only 11,822, as against Mr. Gandhi's lead of 70,465 votes.

Only in Eranad did the Indian Union Muslim League's P.K. Basheer put up a notable performance, with a margin of 22,546 votes, compared with Mr. Gandhi's lead of 56,527.

The 2021 Assembly results were heavily influenced by specific regional issues, such as welfare schemes and tribal development, which helped the LDF retain Mananthavady. However, the UDF capitalised on agrarian distress and the "Gandhi influence" to win Kalpetta and retain Sulthan Bathery. Candidate selection also contributed to the rout in Kalpetta. In addition, the buffer zone controversy and minority representation played key roles in the outcome. In the Nilambur Assembly segment, Left-backed independent P.V. Anvar retained the seat he had won in the 2016 polls. However, the Congress's Aryadan Shoukath won the seat in a byelection last year.

In his second innings from Wayanad, Mr. Gandhi won with a margin of over 3.64 lakh votes in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Later, his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra retained the seat in a byelection, with a margin of over four lakh votes.

However, the UDF's position is not as comfortable as those numbers suggest. The deaths by suicide of Congress leaders N.M. Vijayan and Jose Nelledam, compounded by corruption allegations in Congress-run cooperatives, have exposed fractures the party has struggled to contain. The LDF, meanwhile, has moved quickly on the ground, rolling out a rehabilitation package after the Wayanad landslides and building a new township for displaced residents.

Ms. Vadra has visited Wayanad repeatedly and, through 2026, stayed closely engaged with the landslide recovery effort.

Meanwhile, the increase in human-wildlife conflict across the Lok Sabha segment has left the agrarian community feeling vulnerable.

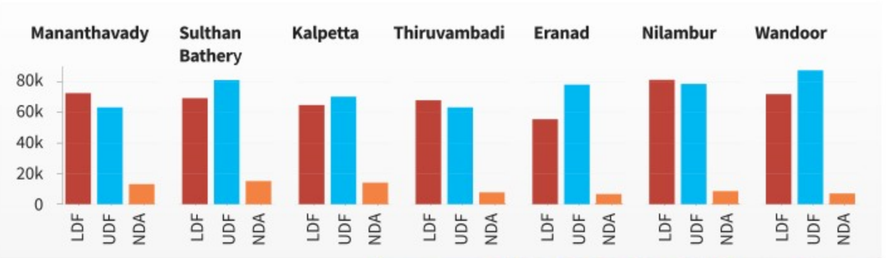
This sense of physical insecurity has been aggravated by the restrictive night traffic bans on National Highway 766 and the Mananthavady- Bavali interstate route. These closures have effectively choked Wayanad's economic arteries, disrupting trade flows and complicating emergency transit. The absence of a comprehensive tertiary healthcare system forces residents to undertake risky journeys to Kozhikode for life-saving treatment.

Amidst these challenges, a ray of hope has emerged with the State government's commencement of the Anakkampoyil-Kalladi-Meppadi twin-tunnel project. Once complete, it will serve as a vital alternative to the congested Thamarassery Ghat road linking Kozhikode to Wayanad. For the electorate, such projects are not merely infrastructural upgrades but essential demands for equity.

Wayanad has emerged as one of India's most closely watched constituencies. Yet, the issues driving voters remain stubbornly local.

Shifting currents

The charts show the alliance-wise number of votes secured in Wayanad's seven Assembly constituencies in the 2021 Assembly polls



- Despite the Rahul wave of 2019, the CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) managed to win three seats- **Mananthavady, Thiruvambadi, and Nilambur**
- In the remaining segments where the Congress-led UDF won, **Mr. Gandhi's leads in 2019 were considerably reduced** by several thousand votes
- The results were heavily influenced by **welfare schemes and tribal development**, which helped the LDF. The UDF capitalised on **agrarian distress**

Political recast: LoP in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi with Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra have transformed the once low-profile Wayanad constituency to one of the most watched. PTI

Tribal council chiefs enter the electoral fray in Assam

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Assam's Mandate 2026 marks a new political journey for tribal council chiefs and their kin.

Tuliram Ronghang, the Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), and his Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council (RHAC) counterpart Tankeswar Rabha are the Bharatiya Janata Party's candidates from the reserved Rongkhang and Dudhnai Assembly constituencies.

A CEM is the head of the government of a specific tribal autonomous area within a State. The KAAC is one of three tribal councils under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, while the RHAC is one of nine statutory autonomous councils in Assam.

'A new platform'

"This is a new journey for me. I carry the aspirations and voices of our people, hoping to serve them from another platform of power," Mr. Ronghang, who has been the CEM of KAAC since October 2013, said. The platform he referred to is the 126-member Assam Assembly.

Known for his proximity to Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Mr. Ronghang faced flak in the KAAC, after two people were killed during a communal conflict over "outsiders" allegedly squatting on government grazing lands in December 2025.

Tuliram Ronghang, CEM of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council will contest from Rongkhang. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A Chief Executive Member heads the government of a tribal autonomous area within a State

Mr. Rabha, who has led the RHAC for three consecutive terms, is the president of the regional Rabha Hasong Joutha Mancha party but is contesting the Dudhnai seat on a BJP symbol. "To be in the Assembly does not mean I will step away from my responsibilities towards the council. I will continue to work for its welfare and for the development of the region," he said after filing his nomination papers on Friday.

Mr. Rabha, who wants the RHAC to be upgraded to a Sixth Schedule area, is one of the strongest tribal voices against the demand to grant Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to six indigenous communities – Adivasi, Chutia, Koch-Rajbongshi, Matak, Moran, and Tai-Ahom. He insists that the Assam ST list can be expanded only if the existing tribes continue to enjoy their rights and privileges.

The Bodoland People's Front has fielded Sewli Mohilary from Kokrajhar, the Assembly constituency and headquarters of the Bodoland Territorial Council, a Sixth Schedule area. She is the wife of Hagrama Mohilary, chief of the BTC.

"I will try to live up to the expectations of the people and work for their development if elected," she said, insisting that she does not foresee much of a challenge from her rivals in the constituency, including Lawrence Islary, the MLA of the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL).

BJP candidate battles against 'Bangladeshi' label in Assam

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

Bijoy Malakar, a two-time MLA and the Bharatiya Janata Party's candidate from the Ram Krishna Nagar constituency in southern Assam, is battling the 'Bangladeshi' tag ahead of the Assembly election.

Suruchi Roy, his Congress rival, has indicated that the April 9 election would be a fight between a *bhumikanya* (daughter of the soil) and a person of doubtful citizenship.

"A case against the BJP candidate is pending in the Gauhati High Court. He has not been able to submit documents (to prove he is Indian)," she said after filing her nomination papers in Sribhumi district on Friday .

Sribhumi is one of three districts in the Bengali-dominated Barak Valley, which has 13 Assembly constituencies.

Mr. Malakar, who won the constituency twice in its earlier avatar as Ratabari before the 2023 delimitation exercise, rubbished her allegation. "Opponents hurl the Bangladeshi charge before every election and try to rattle me. Labelling Bengali Hindus as Bangladeshis is easy in Assam, because they have been soft targets," he said.

EC sets up tribunals for appeals on poll roll in West Bengal

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

The single-member tribunals led by former judges have been formed for 23 districts

The Election Commission of India (EC) formed 19 Appellate Tribunals for West Bengal to hear disputed case appeals rejected by the judicial officers who are disposing of the 60 lakh under-adjudication cases in the State following the special intensive revision (SIR). The move comes amid rising concerns over pending adjudication cases in the State, even as the Assembly election is just a month away.

"The EC hereby constitutes the following Appellate Tribunal(s) for hearing appeals against orders passed by the designated Judicial Officers in respect of inclusion or exclusion of prospective electors in the electoral roll of the State of West Bengal," the order published by the EC on Friday said.

The single-member tribunals led by former judges have been formed for 23 districts.

Appeals may be filed by the concerned people online on the EC website. The applicant can also physically visit the District Magistrate, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, or Sub-Divisional Officer's office to file an appeal to reconsider the inclusion of their names in the State's electoral roll.

This came as a response to the Supreme Court order of March 10, where they asked the Calcutta High Court to request former Chief Justices and judges of High Courts to preside over the appellate tribunals.

In West Bengal, after the SIR process, at least 1.6 crore people were called for hearings, 1.3 crore were categorised under logical discrepancy cases, and 32 lakh were unmapped voters. Among the 1.6 crore hearings, 60 lakh have been put under adjudication. Over 700 judicial officers from West Bengal, Odisha, and Jharkhand have also been roped in to speed up the process and clear all the pending cases before the State heads to the polls.

Most political parties, including the ruling Trinamool Congress, the CPI (M), and the Congress, have raised serious concerns over the disenfranchisement of lakhs of voters.

INBRIEF

PM Modi, President Murmu extend Id-ul-Fitr greetings

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday greeted people on Id-ul-Fitr and hoped for brotherhood and kindness all around. Id was celebrated in the country on Saturday. "Best wishes on Eid-ul-Fitr. May this day further brotherhood and kindness all around. May everyone be happy and healthy. Eid Mubarak!" Mr. Modi said on X. President Droupadi Murmu also greeted the public on the eve of the festival, and urged all to resolve to promote unity and harmony in society and contribute to the nation's progress. She said the festival gives the message of self-control, charity, and compassion for the underprivileged.

Flight to Vancouver returns to Delhi after seven hours in air

A Vancouver-bound Air India Boeing 777-200 LR aircraft, after being airborne for over seven hours, returned to the national capital on Thursday evening after it was found that the plane was not approved for operating the flight, according to sources. Apparently, a lapse in updating the list of requirements for the operation of flights to Canada resulted in the situation. The sources said the flight should have been operated only with a Boeing 777-300 ER aircraft, and there was no approval for Boeing 777-200 LR plane. Without providing specific details, Air India, on Friday, said the aircraft had landed safely at the Delhi airport. PTI

Navy to commission stealth frigate *Taragiri* on April 3

Indigenous stealth frigate *Taragiri*, equipped with cutting-edge weapons, including supersonic missiles, will be commissioned into the Indian Navy on April 3, the Defence Ministry said in a press release on Saturday. The ceremony will be presided over by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in Visakhapatnam, and "will serve as a powerful testament to the nation's journey toward becoming a completely self-reliant naval power". *Taragiri*, the fourth ship of Nilgiri-class and the third one built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd was delivered to the Navy on November 28 last year, marking a milestone in achieving self-reliance in design and construction. PTI

Security forces seize 50 IEDs, arms, ammunition in Manipur

Security forces seized at least 29 firearms and ammunition and 50 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) from several hills and valley districts of Manipur, a police statement said on Saturday. All the recoveries were made on Friday. During an operation, six firearms, including an AK-56 rifle, three grenades and ammunition were recovered from Kakching district, the statement said. Twenty-nine IEDs, along with five locally made hand grenades, five electric detonators and several other explosive items, were also seized from Tengnoupal district, it said. These explosive devices were destroyed on site with safety protocols, it said. PTI

SUDOKU

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No.SS6827 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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4	8	7	2	5	1	9	6	3
3	9	1	8	7	5	2	4	6
7	2	8	1	6	4	3	9	5
6	4	5	9	2	3	7	1	8

State cannot place 'arbitrary ceiling' on disability limits: SC

The RPwD Act, 2016 does not indicate that an upper limit could be prescribed in adjudging suitability of a candidate for a post, says Bench

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has laid down that the state cannot impose "arbitrary" upper limits of disability to exclude candidates with special needs from jobs when they are otherwise equipped to perform their official responsibilities.

A Bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta said the Rights to Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016, only defines the base threshold or the "floor" for reservation eligibility. None of the provisions of the 2016 Act indicates that an upper limit could be prescribed in the matter of adjudging the suitability of a candidate for a particular post.

The legislature, through the 2016 Act, intended only to create a threshold of inclusion, specifically designating 40% as the minimum requirement to qualify for benchmark disability status.

"The RPwD Act does not empower the State to create an arbitrary 'ceiling' that excludes those with higher degrees of disability, provided they are otherwise capable of performing the functional requirements of the role through reasonable accommodation," Justice Mehta observed.

The Supreme Court invoked the Reasonable Accommodation Principle that allowed adjustments to be made to enable disabled persons to effectively counter the barriers posed by their disability.

The court was hearing an appeal filed by an advocate suffering from 90% permanent locomotor disability due to left shoulder disarticulation. Though he scored high marks in the written test conducted by the Himachal Pradesh Public Service Commission for the post of Assistant District Attorney, his candidature was rejected on the ground that the percentage of his disability exceeded the upper limit of 60% advertised for the job.

The State High Court had rejected his plea, compelling the lawyer to move the apex court, which ordered his appointment to the post in two weeks.

The top court found no intelligible or rational criterion in the prescription of the upper limit of 60% disability. It said the candidate had functioned competently as a law professional despite his disability for 15 years.

"This upper limit of disability has clearly been prescribed in sheer ignorance of the principle of reasonable accommodation, and hence the same cannot be sustained in law," Justice Mehta said.

Death of cow vigilante in accident leads to protest, highway block in Mathura

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

Cow vigilantes and supporters clashed with police, alleging that the man was run over by cattle smugglers on Saturday. ANI

People blocked the national highway in Kosi Kalan in Mathura in Uttar Pradesh, protesting over the death of a cow vigilante in a road accident on Saturday. The protesters, mostly cow vigilantes and supporters, clashed with police, alleging that the accident was a deliberate act carried out by cattle smugglers. As the incident triggered tension, heavy police force was deployed in the area.

In the early hours of the day, Chandrashekhar, the cow vigilante who is also a self-styled godman known as 'Farsa Wale Baba' in the Braj region, halted a container truck on the highway. He was accompanied by a disciple. The vehicle, which had a registration number from Nagaland, was stopped over suspicion of transporting cows. Later, upon examination, the police found that the truck only carried soap, phenyl, and shampoo.

'It was just an accident'

The police categorically denied that the accident was linked to cattle smuggling. "Chandrashekhar alias Farsa Baba stopped a vehicle on suspicion in the Kosi police station area between 3:00 a.m. and 4:00 a.m. last night. He was tragically killed when struck by a truck coming from behind due to dense fog. The vehicle which the deceased had stopped was found to contain grocery items and the truck coming from behind was loaded with wires. This is a road accident – it has nothing to do with cow smuggling. The situation has been brought under control by using necessary force against those creating law and order situations. Further legal action is being taken," read a Mathura police statement.

The Congress said the death was unfortunate, however, adding that cow vigilantes taking law into their hand showed the failure of state machinery.

"Firstly, the death of the individual is unfortunate. But who gave the authority to the killed individual to stop a vehicle on suspicion? It means he was attempting to search and usurp the power of law enforcement agencies. Moreover, his supporters damaging vehicles and attacking policemen highlights the breakdown of state machinery in Uttar Pradesh, with mob taking law into their own hands," said Shahnawaz Alam, national secretary, the Congress.

Sea of faith

Wave of gratitude: Muslims offer prayers on the occasion of Id-ul-Fitr at Eidgah in Bhopal on Saturday. A.M.FARUQUI

Barring of Id prayer at Jama Masjid irk Omar, Mehbooba

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

Omar Abdullah

The closure of the historic Jama Masjid for Id prayers and omission of any special prayers for Iran and Palestine at Srinagar's Hazratbal shrine by the J&K Waqf Board on Saturday drew criticism from Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti.

On the occasion of Id, peaceful congregational prayers were held across Jammu and Kashmir amid heightened security. Special prayers were held for Muslims living in Iran, Palestine and Lebanon, who are facing casualties due to the ongoing war in West Asia.

However, the Anjuman Auqaf Jama Masjid, the caretaker body of Srinagar's central mosque, alleged that "restrictions were imposed on the Id congregational prayers at the historic Jama Masjid".

"The authorities' move was unfortunate and unjustified. Such measures hurt the religious sentiments of millions and undermine the fundamental rights to freely practice one's faith," according to Auqaf sources.

Kashmir chief cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, who leads the prayers at the Jama Masjid, was allegedly put under house arrest. "For the seventh consecutive year, amid restrictions and house arrests, Id prayers remain barred at Jama Masjid. It is an irony of our times that those who lock our mosques and Eidgah are the first to wish us Id Mubarak," Mr. Mirwaiz said.

Jama Masjid closure

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister also opposed the Jama Masjid closure. "Id prayers have once again been disallowed at Jama Masjid. Id prayers were offered peacefully across J&K. Security and law enforcement officials repeatedly say that the situation is normal. But what kind of normalcy is this? I hope that such decisions will be changed and people will be allowed to offer their prayers freely," said Mr. Abdullah, who offered the Id prayers at the Hazratbal shrine along with his father and National Conference (NC) president Dr. Farooq Abdullah.

Mr. Abdullah said he prayed for Muslims caught in war-torn countries of West Asia. "This Id is being celebrated at a time when the whole Ummah is worried. There might not be a single Islamic country where war is not happening. Today, I prayed that this war imposed on our people is stopped and peace is restored," said Mr. Abdullah.

Ms. Mufti also offered prayers at the Hazratbal shrine and held "special prayers for Palestine, Lebanon and Iran". She, however, criticised the priest of the Hazratbal shrine, run by the J&K Waqf Board headed by BJP leader Darakshan Andrabi, for dropping Iran, Palestine and Lebanon from special prayers.

"It was surprising that the head priest at the Hazratbal shrine was praising just one person. There was no mention of Iran, Palestine and Lebanon. The cleric should have prayed for the entire Muslim Ummah," said Ms. Mufti. She also criticised the closure of the Jama Masjid in Srinagar for Id prayers.

37 Odisha bus passengers have a narrow escape

The Hindu Bureau
VIZIANAGARAM

Thirty-seven passengers, including Mangu Khilla, Congress MLA from Chitrakonda (ST) constituency, travelling by a bus from Bhubaneswar to Malkangiri in Odisha had a miraculous escape when the vehicle caught fire following a tyre burst in the early hours of Saturday, at Tarapuram of Ramabhadrapuram mandal in Andhra Pradesh's Vizianagaram district.

The bus, which had left Bhubaneswar at 7.30 p.m. on Friday, met with the accident around 4.30 a.m. on Saturday when its rear tyre burst. The bus driver, who managed to control the vehicle, made all the passengers disembark. As soon as the passengers got off the bus, flames engulfed and reduced the vehicle to ashes. Most of the passengers lost their baggage in the accident.

Engineers will be better off with new roles emerging due to AI, say panellists at webinar

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

AI has already entered our lives and students who learn faster and apply smarter will stay relevant, say experts

Panellists at a webinar on 'Next-Gen Engineering Careers: Opportunities and Skills for the Future' assured participants that engineers will be better off compared to other professionals in a world disrupted by Artificial Intelligence (AI). They said that the next wave of ideation and funding will be in the space of AI.

The webinar, jointly presented by Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore and *The Hindu* Education Plus as part of their career path series, provided insights into emerging engineering domains, skills sought by the industry, and how aspiring engineers can make themselves future-ready to stay ahead in the competitive world.

Pavan Desiraju, head of human resources, San Disk, said that AI had already entered people's lives and students who learn faster and apply smarter would be able to stay relevant.

He said engineering will prioritise innovation, adaptability, and practical knowledge in future. "AI is an assistive tool. Curious and creative minds can seamlessly take to next-gen engineering careers moving towards automated systems, sustainability," Mr. Desiraju added.

With job losses on one side and emergence of new jobs on the other, the way in which people worked with shifting job roles will make the difference, according to Sandhya Pentareddy, executive director, VIT Vellore.

She said academic institutions were integrating AI into every course and incorporating an interdisciplinary approach but students, too, are required to upskill themselves. Biotechnology, cybersecurity, computer science, data analytics, and prompt engineering held huge promise for the future, she observed, adding that demand for green energy experts, robotics engineers, and AI specialists will surge.

The webinar may be viewed at *newsth.live/THVITNGY*

INBRIEF

HDFC Bank fires 3 senior staff for gaps in client onboarding

Days after the resignation of HDFC Bank chairman Atanu Chakraborty citing ethical concerns, the bank terminated the services of three employees for gaps in client onboarding at its Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) branch. Sources said the staff were fired over alleged mis-selling of Credit Suisse's additional tier-1 bonds. Following this, the Dubai Financial Services Authority barred the bank from onboarding new customers at DIFC branch. PTI

Govt. modifies Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs

The Finance Ministry on Saturday said the Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs (MCGS-MSME) has been modified to support manufacturers and exporters, allowing a 5% upfront contribution in tranches after the fourth year. As per the revised scheme, the services sector has been included in the scheme, and the cost of equipment/machinery has been reduced up to 60% of the project cost from the earlier 75%, the Finance Ministry said in a statement. PTI

India logs 1 BT coal output for second consecutive year

India has achieved 1 billion tonne (BT) coal production for the second consecutive year amid heightened uncertainties in global energy markets due to the West Asia crisis. "With sustained and coordinated efforts across the coal sector and the invaluable contribution of all stakeholders, the country has successfully achieved the landmark of 1 billion tonne (BT) coal production on March 20 or the second year in a row," the Coal Ministry said in a statement. PTI

Drugmakers make a beeline to unveil generic Semaglutide

Sun, Dr. Reddy's, Zydus, Torrent, Alkem, Glenmark, among generic drugmakers, eyeing a share of market estimated at $1 billion over 2 years

N. Ravi Kumar
HYDERABAD

Weighty drug: Zydus Life Sciences unveiled semaglutide injection under various brands on DCGI approval. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Sun Pharmaceutical, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, Zydus Life Sciences, Torrent Pharma, Alkem Laboratories and Glenmark Pharmaceuticals on Saturday rolled out generic versions of Semaglutide on expiration of the patent on the active ingredient in Danish major Novo Nordisk's blockbuster diabetes and weight loss drugs Wegovy and Ozempic in India.

They joined Natco Pharma and marketing partner Eris Lifesciences, which on Friday announced their product would be available on the first day of the patent expiry. Drugmakers in India are eyeing a share of the domestic Semaglutide market estimated to log $1 billion over next two years.

Pricing, the key

Pricing at a fraction of the innovator's product is the key element for these firms as they roll out a generic belonging to the GLP-1 receptor agonists class of medication to treat type 2 diabetes and obesity.

A leadership team from Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, speaking on the launch of Semaglutide injection, Obeda, for Type 2 diabetes, said the product was available in 2 mg/ 4 mg strengths with cost to the patient at ₹4,200/ month.

CEO of branded markets (India and emerging markets) M.V. Ramana said Dr. Reddy's was hopeful of receiving Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) approval for use for weight management within the next few months.

Announcing the launch of semaglutide injection under Noveltreat and Sematrinity brands, Sun Pharmaceutical said the product was priced significantly lower than the innovator brand.

Weekly therapy costs range from about ₹900 to ₹2,000 for Noveltreat for chronic weight management and ₹750 to ₹1,300 for Sematrinity indicated for treatment of type 2 diabetes.

Zydus Life Sciences unveiled injections under brand names Semaglyn, Mashema and Alterme for diabetes and obesity with monthly treatment cost at about ₹2,200. Glenmark unveiled Glipiq (semaglutide) for diabetes with vials costing at ₹325-₹440.

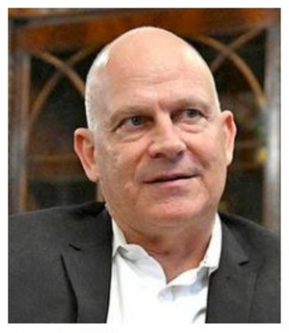
Torrent said it is launching oral and injectable formulations under Sembolic and Semalix brands at a starting price of ₹3,999/ month for the injection. The starting price for oral Semaglutide 3 mg strip of 10 tablets is ₹1,490

Alkem Laboratories rolled out once-weekly injection under Semasize, Obesema and Hepaglide brands at prices starting ₹1,800/month dosage for type 2 diabetes and chronic weight management,

USV introduced Semaglutide under Usema brand in collaboration with Dr. Reddy's.

Fuel-cost hike can hit travel: AI CEO

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI



Campbell Wilson

Air India CEO Campbell Wilson warned airline staff of a possible travel demand squeeze due to the rising cost of aviation turbine fuel and urged for "tighter-than-ever" control on all non-essential spending.

He also cautioned, depending on how the situation evolved, the airline may have to trim capacity

In his first remarks on the impact of the West Asia conflict, in an internal memo on March 20 reviewed by *The Hindu*, Mr. Wilson noted Indian carriers had introduced fuel surcharges, starting at about ₹400 for domestic travel and higher for international routes, to offset escalating fuel costs. However, fare increases had a limit, he warned.

Limit on pricing

"Not every customer is willing to pay higher airfares, so there is a limit to how high we can price before demand drops," he wrote in the memo.

He also flagged the risk of weakening travel sentiment amid wider economic uncertainty. "Given the current climate, customers and companies may be less willing to travel than before the conflict and could choose to defer trips."

The financial impact of the oil and energy crisis will only hit next month, Mr. Wilson said referring to the monthly revision in ATF prices.

"But already airlines in some parts of the world are reducing some flights due to high fuel prices. Depending on how fuel costs, airfares and customer demand moves, we may also have to adjust," he said. United Airlines' Scott Kirby said the airline would be cutting some unprofitable flights over the next two quarters as it was preparing for oil prices to rise as high as $175 a barrel and stay above $100 until the end of 2027. Scandinavian Airlines is also cutting 1000 flights in April.

Since the conflict began, AI cancelled about 2,500 flights to the region, the CEO wrote. It is operating only about 30% of flights to West Asia due to closure of airspace and safety issue.

Long- and ultra-long-haul flights to Europe and North America are now rerouted along even longer paths "consuming more fuel and adding more time," the CEO said.

However, AI is also seeing 'pockets of new demand,' particularly for non-stop services between India and Europe that bypass West Asia. Seizing the opportunity, AI is operating 118 additional flights on the routes between March 10-28, redeploying larger aircraft from Gulf sector.

'BP, diabetes cases surging among staff aged 20-35'

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

India's leading employee benefits platform, Pazcare launched the Employee Health Matters 2026 Handbook which highlights how metabolic health risks such as hypertension, pre-diabetes, and high cholesterol are appearing much earlier in employees' careers than previously expected.

As per the study 1 in 4 men aged 31 to 35 have abnormal HbA1c levels, signalling early risk of pre-diabetes. Employees aged 20 to 35 account for 63% of all cholesterol abnormalities.

Almost 50% of male employees under 35 show abnormal blood pressure and more than 60% deliveries happen via C-Sec driving up cost.

Drawing on 77,000 insurance claims across 4,00,000 covered lives over five years, along with 12,000 preventive health screenings, the handbook shows how present-day work environments are shifting employee health trends and influencing corporate healthcare costs.

The handbook also identifies gaps in early diagnosis and preventive care. Approximately 11% of hospital admissions occur without a clear diagnosis at admission, often due to delayed care for symptoms such as fever, fatigue, or infections. Infections account for 9% of hospitalisations, with dengue, chikungunya and intestinal infections contributing to over 80% of infection-related claims.

India's options boom, tale of caution

NEWS ANALYSIS

Ashokamithran T.
MUMBAI

Dicey game: A man walks past a screen displaying the news and stock market updates at the BSE in Mumbai. REUTERS

Last month, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman raised the taxes on futures and options trading and the markets responded with a 2% crash. She said that the move was intended to arrest excessive speculation in the market.

An option is a contract that lets a trader lock-in today the price at which he/ she can buy or sell a stock or index in the future. The product helps protect investors and traders from market swings that can incur them losses, an activity called hedging.

It is, however, widely used by retail traders to speculate on the value of the stock for immediate gains and such behaviour in large scale can distort the market.

SEBI acknowledged the challenge in a study which found 9/10 persons trading in options lost money and came out with measures to curb volumes in the market, which is among the largest in the world in terms of number of contracts. SEBI, however, said the losses remained even after steps were announced, the report said.

Speculation chances

The product entered the 25th year of existence in 2026 in the Indian market. A committee headed by L.C. Gupta in 1998 recommended phased introduction of futures and options and laid down the basic ideas and structures to establish fairness.

A subsequent panel in 2002, headed by J.R. Varma, economist and now distinguished professor at Dhirubhai Ambani University and also a former MPC member, said the market was ready for the introduction and solidified rules.

"Everything that we take for granted today in the cash market, they all started in the derivatives because there we were drawing on a clean slate," Prof. Varma said in a conversation with *The Hindu*.

The report also addressed speculators while setting up the structure. For an investor to hedge the volatility of stocks, there has to be someone to take the opposite bet and that person is usually a speculator. "Decisions about many aspects of derivatives trading would have to strike a balance between the needs of the hedgers and the necessity to attract an adequate number of well-capitalised speculators who are prepared to take upon themselves the price risk which hedgers want to give up," the committee noted.

The recommendations aimed at setting up a structure for derivatives market to function and were largely implemented which included putting in place of strict entry barriers for intermediaries and brokers, among others.

New medium

The markets, however, evolved and the growth of brokerage apps made it easy to speculate on complex instruments. The risk of mis-selling to uninformed clients became more possible with proliferation of financial influencers promising unrealistic returns.

"With an explosion in index options trading on the expiry day over time, concerns arose around investor protection and systemic stability," SEBI officials wrote in a white paper that compared cash with derivative markets, signalling the balance the LCGC report mentioned may have skewed in favour of speculators at least in option contracts with short contract terms.

There was a dissenting voice in the 1998-committee from the then BSE President M.G. Damani, who felt "it would be dangerous to open the derivatives market to small investors in the beginning," adding that the economy was not mature enough for it in the late 1990s.

In the list of questions he posed to the committee before dissociating himself from the recommendations, he suggested that members be filtered by qualifying examinations and net worth criteria.

While brokers do undergo tight scrutiny which was later strengthened, conversations have now shifted towards filtering retail traders, too, through suitability norms like a test.

Recently, while speaking at an event in Mumbai, the chief executive officer of National Stock Exchange (NSE) Ashish Chauhan said developing countries such as India can't let lower income strata speculate and suggested minimum qualifying criteria to even participate in the derivatives market, echoing Mr. Damani's sentiments in 1998.

Prof. Varma is, however, unsure if such frameworks can help as losing money in the options market could happen even with those with the knowledge.

People ultimately learn and investment as a long-term goal is increasing in popularity. He further said gambling behaviour had always existed and it was the product that kept changing, he said.

Concentration of younger rather than older people in the instruments is a saving grace as the former is resilient, he continued.

Other markets across the world have had such speculative booms in the capital markets and they were dealt with through a combination of frameworks, conditions or even strict surveillance,

It is impossible to curtail such behavioural risk and therefore, regulation has shifted from changing behaviour to containing its consequences, said Jayesh H., co-founder, Juris Corp.

SEBI maintains that the problem existed only in short-tenure options and the impact of existing methods need to be studied before making any further initiatives.

Markets have evolved, and so have the investors, but Mr. Damani's fears of widespread speculation coming out of small trader participation remains a challenge to regulators.

Quantum test shows cause, effect need not follow a set order

Vasudevan Mukunth

In everyday life, cause always comes before effect. A window won't break before you throw a ball at it. But quantum mechanics has long hinted that this rule can be broken. Physicists from the University of Vienna and the Christian Doppler Laboratory for Photonic Quantum Computer have now taken a big step to proving it in an experiment.

Their results were published in *PRX Quantum* on March 17.

Quantum systems like atoms or electrons can exist in superpositions: a particle can be in two states at once until it is measured. When causality itself works the same way – e.g. if A happens before B and B happens before A at the same time – it's called indefinite causal order (ICO).

Scientists have shown ICO can be used to increase the performance of quantum key distribution – a technology scientists worldwide, including recently at IIT-Delhi, are exploring to make communications unhackable.

But before anyone can build technology around it, physicists need proof that ICO is a real phenomenon.

In standard causality, it's impossible for an experiment to score higher than 1.75 on a mathematical test called VBC.

If it's higher, the experiment has ICO. The researchers created pairs of light particles (photons) and sent them through a quantum switch. The switch applied two operations to the photons but in a blurred order: neither operation was definitively first. When the team measured the photons that exited, the test's VBC score was 1.83.

The photons were correlated with each other in a way that couldn't be explained by anything happening to them in a fixed sequence. For instance if the photons had gone through operation A then B or B then A, their properties at the end would be correlated up to a certain degree. But the experimenters measured photons whose properties were correlated in a way that couldn't exist unless there was no fixed order in which the operations happened. The alternative: the photons were in a superposition of both orderings at once.

The researchers were candid that their experiment had loopholes that prevented the result from being dispositive. For instance, because the experiment happened on a single table, it is not yet possible to rule out that some unknown signal travelled between the components to mimic the result.

Closing such loopholes will require separating the participants by much larger distances and improving detection efficiency.

Cost concerns delay safer building codes for Himalayas

India's earthquake safety codes are under scrutiny after the government withdrew updated building standards backed by a decade of scientific research; the revision would have nearly doubled hazard estimates in the Himalaya and northeast

Jacob Koshy

Are the risks to structures in the Himalayas and northeastern states from earthquakes overestimated? Scientists, structural engineers, and representatives from several government ministries are expected to deliberate and report to the Cabinet Secretariat in the coming weeks.

This follows the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) withdrawing updated criteria that construction projects ought to incorporate to guard against collapse during earthquakes. The withdrawal was prompted, *The Hindu* reported on March 7, by a Cabinet Secretariat order stating the new standards "materially affected ... ongoing and future infrastructure projects including metro rail projects" and that a "holistic and comprehensive review of the revised IS 1893 be conducted, taking into account the perspectives of all stakeholders."

However, a decade of government-commissioned studies involving scientists from geological, seismological, and geotechnical and structural engineering institutions are clear: the potential damage to structures such as residential buildings, bridges, and power plants in the Himalayan States is higher than current risk assessments.

Engineers and architects are required to follow the IS 1893 standard. India's zoning map delineates four zones.

Zone II is the calmest; Zone V is assigned to areas along the Himalayan front, where magnitude 8 quakes have occurred in living memory. At such forces, buildings experience stresses that can buckle steel columns and have floors pancaking onto one another.

For context, a magnitude 7 quake 20 km from a fault can produce peak ground acceleration (PGA) exceeding Zone V's design threshold.

The withdrawn update originated from a 2024 paper in the *Indian Journal of Earth System Sciences* that proposed a way to estimate earthquake hazards consonant with global methods.

It was the outcome of a project the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) had commissioned in 2019 from IIT-Madras and BIS. It was preceded by projects in 2007-11 and 2013-17 – all to move the hazard assessment towards a "probabilistic framework". This framework differs from India's existing approach to assess risk to regions only based on past seismicity; it incorporates several variables to forecast forces on a structure in the event of the strongest probable quakes.

The NDMA accepted the study and BIS published its outcomes in IS 1893 as a 2025 update – which was then withdrawn.

The authors comprise scientists from the IITs in Mumbai and Chennai, the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board, and the Geological Survey.

"These PGA values are not derived based on any quantitative earthquake hazard assessment and are abysmally low, especially for the higher earthquake zones," the authors report. "The 1897 Great Shillong Plateau earthquake in northeast India is reported to have resulted in PGA values more than [1 g]." They note that "design accelerations in similar areas worldwide are taken to be two times (or more) compared to that in the existing zone map of India." The study was led by S.T.G. Raghukanth, C.V.R. Murty, Bhargavi Podili, and K.P. Sreejaya of IIT Madras.

Previously, regions were assigned Zone IV or V only after a significant earthquake; the surrounding areas were assumed to be at lower risk despite decades of pent-up strain. The framework also didn't account for local soil conditions that amplify seismic waves or data from 168 Himalayan monitoring stations.

"The earth is a dynamic system. Every 50 years or so, PGA values change by about 10%," said O.P. Mishra, former director, National Centre for Seismology.

"In a probabilistic assessment you account for a variety of factors that might influence shaking."

The new map assigns PGA values of 0.15-0.75 g for Zones II through a newly introduced Zone VI. It draws on 69,519 earthquake events from 2600 BC to 2019, 36 seismogenic source zones, and ground motion models. These values have likely rattled agencies such as the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation and the National Dam Safety Authority.

"Recent evidence shows that 95% of those who die in earthquakes are those who live in 1-3 storey houses that are inadequately designed," said a scientist involved in the exercise. "The 0.75 factor is also a lower number." Pakistan and Nepal use values close to 0.75g, while the U.S. and Japan routinely calculate 1 g or more, he added.

One NDMA official said the recommended values "were too high" and would strain public spending. "On one hand we have the situation that a large proportion do not follow even the [2016] codes. Then with these stringent numbers, steel, cement costs will go up manifold; where there is money to build four schools or clinics in a village, only one will be made."

The NDMA didn't respond to requests for official comment.

Shaky ground

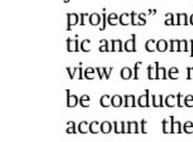
Potential damage to all structures in Himalayan States exceed what current assessments predict

Quake fury: A view of a building destroyed in the 2001 Bhuj earthquake. An estimated 20,000 people are thought to have been killed in the event. AFP

Proposed revisions would have nearly doubled peak ground acceleration values to match international safety standards for construction

- Experts believe that most earthquake fatalities occur in small houses that **lack adequate structural design**
- Government officials argue the **proposed standards** are too theoretical and would drastically increase public infrastructure spending
- The Indian government recently withdrew updated **earthquake construction standards** due to concerns about high infrastructure project costs
- Scientific studies indicate that existing seismic assessments for the **Himalayan region** significantly underestimate the risk
- The Bureau of Indian Standards is reviewing the **seismic code** to balance scientific accuracy with economic feasibility

Intentional communication is not a uniquely human trait



SPEAKING OF SCIENCE

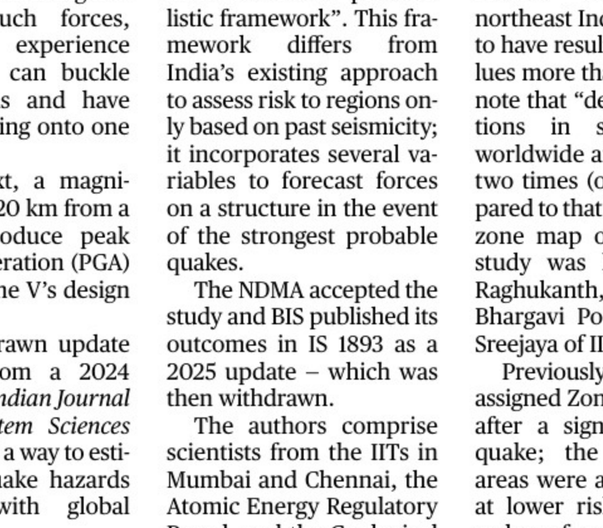
D. Balasubramanian

All living beings communicate. In honeybees, communicative signals in the form of a wiggle dance transmit information on the location of flowers. Recipient bees decode this information and use it to guide their behaviour. Human language goes beyond broadcasting: it can be used to intentionally reshape what another person thinks or does by adjusting the message based on what we believe the other person already knows.

Intentionality requires an audience towards whom the signal is directed. How do we use a gesture to ask someone to do something for us? Take an example of a group at a dining table, where your goal is for a water bottle to be passed to you. First you make sure someone has your attention. Then you make a gesture, and repeat it if you are not understood, until the water is passed on.

Is intentionality a uniquely human trait? Experiments suggest that apes communicate in a goal-directed manner using appropriate gestures. At a higher level, they even seem to have an idea of what other apes in their vicinity know. Orangutans in captivity try communicating with their human handlers, using a particular gesture until their food arrives. Give them the wrong food and they will change over to another gesture – they seem to know that you know!

This brings us to elephants. Elephants are large animals that live in groups with a complex social structure. They are known to have cognitive skills: they are even known to mourn the death of a group member, standing guard over the body and covering it with tree branches.



The elephant named Suvarna engages with her calf 'Sudha' at Bannerghatta National Park, 2020. FILE PHOTO

Individuals, females particularly, are known to greet acquaintances even when they meet after years. The exchange involves flapping their ears and swinging their trunks from side to side, both gestures that require visual attention on part of the recipient. Elephants also have a repertoire of other gestures. Only a few of these, such as touching the recipient with their tail, do not require eye contact.

Elephants may also convey their intentions to their human handlers. In experiments conducted in a conservation area near the Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, two trays, one empty and the other containing six apples, were placed before an elephant. If a researcher stood along with the trays, facing the animal and making full eye contact, it would begin moving its trunk in the direction of the tray with the apples. Soon, it would get its reward. However, if it was not given all the apples, it would continue to swing its trunk, as if indicating 'I want more'. When the researcher stood facing away from the elephant, there were no gestures (*Royal Society Open Science*, 12-242203, 2025).

In India, we have a long history of mahouts, the elephant handlers at temples and in conservation zones, who have one-to-one relationships with elephants that can last a lifetime. Mahouts communicate with elephants and read their emotions using a combination of touch, gestures, and vocal jargon. The zoologist Nibha Nambudiri has meticulously documented elephant-mahout interactions in her book, *Practical Elephant Management*. At IIT-Guwahati, Seema Lokhandwala and her colleagues, using classifier algorithms, have shown that elephant trumpet calls to mahouts are distinct from those aimed at other elephants. (*Speech & Computer*, 426-437, 2022, Springer).

(The article was written in collaboration with Sushil Chandani, who works in molecular modelling)

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SNAPSHOTS

Oceans more than gases helped earth cool

When researchers recently analysed Antarctic ice cores to reconstruct the earth's climate over the last three million years, they found that the world's oceans cooled by 2.5 C, most of it around 2.7 million years ago. While methane levels were unchanged, those of carbon dioxide did so barely 2.9-1.2 million years ago. The findings suggest that factors like ocean circulation and ice sheet growth, rather than gas levels alone, primarily drove long-term cooling.

Nifty chemistry offers to make laundry cleaner

Researchers have made a fabric coating that offers to eliminate detergents from laundry. They sprayed alternating layers of compounds called PDADMAC and PVS onto textiles. The spray formed a dense layer that effectively repelled stains, residues, and germs, and could be washed off by rinsing under tap water. The team has estimated the technique could lower water and electricity use by 80% and also eliminate the discharge of detergent residues and microplastics in the wastewater.

New reaction to recover Li from battery waste

A new method called halometallurgy could recover lithium from Li-ion battery waste. First, the battery materials are heated to move lithium from the cathode into a mix of sodium and potassium chloride salts, breaking the cathode's structure into transition metal oxides. As the salts melt, they coat the particles to create a barrier against oxygen, which allows graphite to reduce the oxides into metallic alloys. Finally, up to 96% of lithium is recovered in the saline solution.

Question Corner

Waves in the ocean

Where or what is the human mind?

Evidence points to the human mind not being a physical object you can touch, but a process the brain creates.

The foundation of the mind consists of approximately 86 billion nerve cells, a.k.a. neurons. These cells form a large and intricate web where they communicate by sending electrical signals and releasing chemical messengers called neurotransmitters across gaps known as synapses. Glial cells support these neurons by supplying nutrients and maintaining the structure.

However, the mind is more than just a bunch of cells. Most researchers view the mind as an emergent property of the brain, meaning that while individual neurons can't think or feel, their collective interaction produces consciousness and emotions.

For an analogy, if the brain is the hardware of the body, the mind appears to be the software or maybe the active processing unit. It encompasses everything from human logic and language to people's deepest feelings. And research suggests that the mind is quite literally what the brain does.

Readers may send their questions / answers to science@thehindu.co.in

Why do electric vehicle batteries catch fire?

Are they safe? Do external conditions matter? What can industry and users do to ensure safety?

Vasudevan Mukunth

The story so far:
A fire tore through a house in Indore on March 18, killing eight people, including two children. An electric vehicle (EV) charging point outside appeared to have sparked the blaze. An investigation is underway.

Are EV batteries safe?
Nearly every EV on the road runs on lithium-ion batteries, which use the same chemistry that powers millions of smartphones and laptops. They pack more energy than lead-acid batteries and are generally safe when managed well.

A common cause of EV battery fires is thermal runaway. A lithium-ion battery packs thousands of cells tightly together, each generating heat as it charges and discharges. Normally, an onboard computer called the battery management system keeps the temperature within a safe range. But if something goes wrong, one cell can overheat, causing neighbouring cells to overheat in a chain reaction that can outpace the cooling system. This process releases a toxic cocktail of gases, including hydrogen fluoride, in a flammable vapour that eases the 'path' to a fire.

What causes thermal runaway?
Manufacturers protect battery packs by packing them inside shells of reinforced steel or aluminium. However, a hard impact – like from a strong impact to the undercarriage – can deform the casing and puncture or deform the cells inside, leading to a short circuit.

> Parking an EV in direct sunlight for long periods or charging it immediately after a long drive can add to the thermal stress. Flooding also threatens batteries

Charging a battery beyond its designed capacity can force charge to build up in the 'wrong' places inside cells. Reputable EV manufacturers include safeguards in their charging systems to prevent this but third-party or damaged chargers may not pay attention to these limits. And regularly charging a battery overnight with such a charger can increase the risk.

As the battery expands and contracts during use, rare manufacturing defects such as a small protrusion of metal can bring the positive and negative electrodes in touch, causing an enormous current to flow between them. This releases heat that then spreads through the pack. Extension cords or domestic wiring in old buildings can also overheat when they cannot handle the sustained current.

Do external conditions matter?
In hot weather, the cooling system can struggle to shed heat. Parking an EV in direct sunlight for long periods or charging it immediately after a long drive can add to the thermal stress.

As batteries age, their internal components also degrade. So users who ignore warning lights or skip inspections can miss early signs of swelling or chemical decomposition.

Flooding also threatens batteries. The contaminated water after heavy rains can infiltrate a battery pack and cause short circuits. Several EV fires have occurred in the days after vehicles were submerged in floodwater.

EVs are not uniquely dangerous. Petrol cars catch fire too, and more often, as they carry flammable fuel next to an engine running at a high temperature. The difference is that EV battery fires burn hotter, spread faster, and are harder to put out (as the battery releases oxygen as it burns).

The Indore incident was made worse by the fact that LPG cylinders were stored in the house, a sports bike was parked inside, and electronic door locks jammed when the power failed.

What are industry and users doing?
Most EVs today have channels alongside the cells filled with a coolant that absorbs their heat and dissipates it into the air. Scientists are currently developing a new form of cooling where the coolant evaporates as it absorbs heat and releases it into the air, improving heat transfer and handling temperature spikes better.

Manufacturers are also exploring batteries with a solid electrolyte rather than the current liquid to reduce the risk of a thermal runaway, while refining firewalls inside existing designs so that if one cell fails, the fire does not spread.

Users can also take precautions by using the charger that came with the vehicle or one certified by the manufacturer, avoiding routine unattended charging, ensuring home electrical systems meet the necessary standards for high-power appliances, and having EV batteries inspected after any significant impact. Experts have recommended letting batteries cool after a long drive before charging and also keeping the charging area clear.

The Bureau of Indian Standards released updated safety norms for EV batteries in 2023 after a spate of fires the previous year prompted a government review. As part of its AIS-156 standard, the Automotive Research Association of India also requires tests to check how heat propagates in a battery and requires battery packs to give a vehicle's users at least five minutes to escape before a fire.

Why is Israel attacking Lebanon?

Why is the ground offensive concentrated in southern Lebanon? Why has Israel carried out several attacks against Hezbollah in the past and why does it want to dismantle the Shia militant group? What does it want to achieve?

Stanly Johny

The story so far:
As the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran enters its fourth week, another, perhaps more brutal, war is unfolding in the region. On March 16, Israel announced the launch of a ground offensive in Lebanon against Hezbollah. It has also carried out massive air strikes in southern Lebanon and the southern outskirts of Beirut, killing at least 1,000 people and displacing about a million. The ground offensive is concentrated in hilltop towns in southern Lebanon, where the Israel Defence Forces are facing stiff resistance from Hezbollah fighters.

Why did Israel launch the offensive?
On paper, a ceasefire had been reached between Hezbollah and Israel in November 2024. The ceasefire was reached after a month-long campaign aimed at weakening Hezbollah, a Shia militant group and political party in Lebanon that maintains close ties with Iran.

When Israel launched its invasion of Gaza after Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack, Hezbollah fired rockets into the Shebaa Farms, a Lebanese territory occupied by Israel. Israel responded with air strikes, triggering further Hezbollah rocket attacks that displaced thousands of Israelis from the Upper Galilee region.

In September 2024, Israel assassinated Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah in an air strike. The Israeli plan was to disrupt Hezbollah's command structure before launching a ground offensive. During the ground battle, Israel pushed Hezbollah fighters away from the border and occupied strategically important regions in southern Lebanon. In November that year, Israel agreed to a ceasefire, but it continued air strikes nearly every day in Lebanon, targeting Hezbollah positions. Hezbollah hardly retaliated.

> Israel has declared that it wants to dismantle Hezbollah's military capabilities, push them away from southern Lebanon, and create a buffer inside the Lebanese territory

On February 2026, after Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed by a joint Israeli-American air strike, Hezbollah fired hundreds of rockets into northern Israel. Israel retaliated with air strikes, which was followed by the ground offensive.

Damaged buildings and vehicles in Beirut after an Israeli airstrike, on March 21. The Israeli military said it had launched strikes targeting Hezbollah. AFP

What is Hezbollah?
Over the past five decades, Israel has carried out multiple attacks in Lebanon. In 1978, Israel launched an incursion into southern Lebanon to push the Palestinian militias based in the region, under the umbrella of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), to the north of the Litani River. In 1982, Israel launched another invasion with the same objective. It managed to force the PLO to relocate from Lebanon, but the consequences of the war led to the rise of Hezbollah as a militant Shia organisation. Iran, where the Shia clergy established an Islamic government in 1979, backed Hezbollah.

When Israeli troops stayed in southern Lebanon to keep a buffer on the Lebanese side of the border, Hezbollah emerged as the major resistance force. Israeli troops, faced with Hezbollah's guerrilla attacks, were forced to withdraw from Lebanon in 2000 – which was celebrated by Hezbollah as the first "Arab victory against Israel".

In 2006, Israel attacked Lebanon again, to dismantle Hezbollah's military infrastructure. After a month-long campaign, Israel had to agree to a ceasefire and pull back. This allowed Hezbollah to rise as a major socio-political and militant movement of Lebanon's sectarian system, where the army is very weak. But Israel has always called Hezbollah – which it designates as a terrorist outfit alongside the U.S. and their Western partners – an "Iranian proxy". There was an uneasy calm along the Israel-Lebanon border after the 2006 war, but it was broken by Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack.

How strong is Hezbollah today?
Hezbollah, because of its long resistance history and battlefield experience, is generally seen as a powerful fighting force. After the 2006 war, they joined the Syrian civil war to fight alongside the forces of President Bashar al-Assad. Hezbollah's involvement played a crucial role in turning around the civil war from 2015 to 2018.

Hezbollah, a state within the state in Lebanon, possesses tens of thousands of rockets and missiles. However, in September 2024, Israel's pager explosions, which targeted Hezbollah's mid-level commanders, and killed the group's top leadership, threw it into disarray. Around that time, Abu Mohammed al-Golani, a former al-Qaeda jihadist who was running Syria's Idlib, started a campaign to take over Damascus. The Syrian Army, which was targeted by hundreds of Israeli air strikes, was in a bad shape. Syria's three main supporters were Iran, Russia, and Hezbollah. Russia was busy with Ukraine. And Iran's space for manoeuvre was limited. Hezbollah was pushed back by Israeli attacks. It took only 12 days for Golani's Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (formerly Jabhat al-Nusra, al-Qaeda's Syria branch) to capture Damascus.

The fall of Assad's government in December cut a vital link between Hezbollah and Iran, which further weakened both sides. From the early 1980s, Iran had provided money, weapons and training to Hezbollah, and Baathist Syria acted as a land bridge between Iran and Syria (through Iraq, at least since 2003). In subsequent months, Israel continued to pound Hezbollah and the group hardly retaliated. But Hezbollah was also using this period to rebuild its command structure and replenish its arsenals, preparing for an eventual war. And when Israel and the U.S. killed Khamenei in February 2026, they joined the war, drawing in thousands of troops into Lebanon.

What does Israel want to achieve?
Israel has declared that it wants to dismantle Hezbollah's military capabilities, push them away from southern Lebanon, and create a buffer inside the Lebanese territory. Israel has issued evacuation orders for the whole of southern Lebanon and some neighbourhoods in the north of the Litani River. It has bombed some bridges on the river to cut off supplies for Hezbollah. Israel is also pressing the Lebanese government to take action to disarm Hezbollah.

Hezbollah's version is that it is defending Lebanese territory. It has fired more than 1,000 rockets and drones at Israel since March 2, in a clear message that it still possesses attack capabilities. Israel is also facing stiff resistance in the hilltop towns of southern Lebanon, particularly in Khiam, a high plateau overlooking the Hula Valley in the south. While Israel seeks to push Hezbollah out militarily, an approach it tried several times in the past and failed, Hezbollah, though weakened by regional developments, is resisting with asymmetrical tactics. It is the Lebanese people who are caught in the middle.

What did the SC say about paid maternity leave?

Why did the Supreme Court strike down Section 60(4) of the Social Security Code, 2020? What did it say about maternity leave for adoptive mothers? What did the Court recommend that the Union government do regarding paternity leave?

Priscilla Jebaraj

The story so far:
Last week, the Supreme Court ruled that adoptive mothers could avail themselves of 12 weeks of paid maternity leave regardless of the age of their children at the time of adoption. Striking down Section 60(4) of the Social Security Code, 2020 (previously Section 5(4) of the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961), which limited this benefit only to mothers who adopted children under the age of three months, the Court said that an adoptive mother had the same rights and obligations towards the child as a biological mother.

What is the law on maternity leave in India?
Statutory maternity benefits for working women in India began to be granted in colonial times. The Bombay Maternity Benefit Act, 1929, covered women factory workers. It was followed by similar laws in other parts of the country in the run-up to Independence. In 1961, Parliament passed the Maternity Benefit Act to provide paid maternity leave of 12 weeks to working women across the country.

In 2017, the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act not only extended the period of paid maternity leave for biological mothers to 26 weeks, but also inserted a provision extending maternity leave for the first time to adoptive mothers or surrogate mothers. Section 5(4) of the Act stated that surrogate or adoptive mothers legally adopting a child below three months would be entitled to maternity leave for a period of 12 weeks from the date the child is handed over to the mother.

> The Court noted that the period of leave plays a key role in fostering emotional bond between the mother and the child

Mother and child. GETTY IMAGES

Why was this law considered inadequate?
This provision was challenged in 2021 by Hamsaanandini Nanduri, a lawyer who adopted siblings in 2017. Ms. Nanduri told *The Hindu* that her Bengaluru-based law firm gave her only six weeks of paid maternity leave. "I could not leave my young children at home to turn up in office after just six weeks, so I took some additional months of unpaid leave. But it made me angry that there was no policy about it," she said.

Terming the 12 weeks of maternity leave granted in 2017 to adoptive or surrogate mothers as "mere lip service", the petitioner contended that when compared to the 26 weeks of maternity leave granted to biological mothers, the provision violated the fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution.

The three-month limit was unjust to both children and parents, depriving older adoptees from receiving the maternal care they need for their development and integration into their adoptive families, her lawyer argued.

The petitioner also pointed out in Court that adoption procedures take much longer than three months in India.

Also, as Ms. Nanduri told *The Hindu:* "I found on filing an RTI (Right to Information) application with CARA (Central Adoption Resource Authority) that less than 5% of children adopted at that time were under the age of three months."

What did the Court say about motherhood?
The Court made it clear that motherhood cannot be seen through the "narrow lens of biology" alone. It referred to adoption as part of the "right to reproductive autonomy". It noted that "the period of leave plays a crucial role in fostering [an] emotional bond between the mother and the child". The Court added that stress hormone levels in children raised in orphanages are often higher than those in children brought up in a familial environment, which pointed to a greater need for paid maternal leave for older adoptees.

How will the judgment help adoptees and their parents?
Madhumitha Venkataraman started interviewing for jobs as a senior HR executive while waiting for an adoption referral, stipulating in every interview that she would need paid time off to support her child. Several multinational organisations balked at the idea of granting leave for more than a few weeks. But Ms. Venkataraman was finally recruited by a global media company that promised her one year of paid maternity leave. "My son came home at the age of three and a half months in 2023, so I was not eligible for maternity leave under the old law. But because this company was so accommodating, I did not have to choose between my career and my parenting," she said. "There are emotional needs, and not just for the child. The time at home with my son gave me space to grow into motherhood," she said. It is this time and space that other adoptive mothers say they will be entitled to as well, from now.

Noopur Goyal's daughter was 15 months old when she came home in 2021. "I worked as a paediatric cardiologist at a top hospital in Delhi. I knew there was no provision for maternity leave, so I had to give up my job," said Dr. Goyal, a single parent who works as a freelance consultant in Noida. "I had brought her into a new world, so I had to be present for her. An adopted child has been uprooted twice. I needed the time at home with her to build attachment and give her a sense of security." Dr. Goyal said she was financially stable to be able to do this, but she is "glad now that there is a law mandating 12 weeks of paid maternity leave for all adoptive mothers."

What did the Court say about paternity leave?
The Court also called on the Union government to examine the need for a formal law recognising paternity leave for all fathers, adoptive or biological. Noting that India's legal framework does not adequately account for the role of fathers in childcare, it underlined the importance of shared parenting. As of now, only male government servants are entitled to 15 days' paternity leave for the birth of a child or adoption. Leaves in the private sector are generally determined by company policies.

PROFILES

Voice of America

Tucker Carlson

The American conservative commentator, who says his worldview is shaped by his Christian faith, has emerged as one of the most influential critics of U.S. interventionist foreign policy, Washington's support for Tel Aviv, and, more specifically, Israel's war in Palestine and the ongoing U.S.-Israel attack on Iran

Varghese K. George

American conservative commentator Tucker Carlson is one of the most consequential political figures in today's United States. Millions tune into his monologues, interviews and shows across platforms and formats at a scale rarely seen in the western public sphere. He has termed the war against Iran "evil", and said, following the American bombing of a school in Iran, that a country that thinks it is acceptable to kill innocent children in a war was not worth defending.

Mr. Carlson's influence comes from the courage of innocence. He casts himself as the child who screams that the king is naked in the parade. He asks the most elementary questions about claims held as theology by the religious and secular warriors of the West, simply by exposing them to scrutiny. What actually is "Israel's right to exist", which is distinct from any other country – the U.K., U.S., Lebanon, or Iran?, he asked *The Economist* editor-in-chief Zanny Minton Beddoes. Where exactly in the Bible does it say that supporting Israel is obligatory for Christians, he asked Republican Senator Ted Cruz, who had suggested precisely that. Can the modern state of Israel claim all of the land the Old Testament says god gave to his chosen people, he asked the U.S. Ambassador to Israel, Mike Huckabee.

After some experiments with television on CNN and MSNBC, where he tried to play the mandatory conservative role, he landed in a primetime slot on Fox News in 2017, just as Mr. Trump was upending American politics. They agreed on most issues and reinforced each other's positions. Mr. Trump considered Mr. Carlson as a Vice-Presidential candidate in 2024 before choosing J.D. Vance, who is also Mr. Carlson's friend. Mr. Carlson tried to persuade Mr. Trump against launching a war on Iran. They have since fallen out.

Mr. Carlson was let go by Fox News in April 2023 – when his viewership was miles ahead of the competition. The separation turned out to be liberation. His prime-time show on Fox had drawn 3.5 million viewers nightly. The day after his exit, the slot had 20% fewer viewers; no show on American cable news has matched him since. Mr. Carlson launched his independent show on X in June 2023 – the debut episode was viewed approximately 120 million times. His interviews and programmes have continued to command massive audiences that no American commentator or public figure, save Mr. Trump himself, can dream of.

ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

A worldview shaped by faith

Mr. Carlson says his worldview is shaped by his Christian faith – which is against violence, war, collective punishment, racism and discrimination. This interpretation of faith makes him a firm opponent of abortion, same-sex marriage and affirmative action. He argues that mass migration is remaking the demographic composition of western societies, and opposes it. He calls for large families. His hybrid views rile champions of liberal internationalism, global trade, Zionism and corporate capitalism. He has so disoriented the neat pretensions and classifications of the Western public discourse that he gets labelled a white nationalist and an Islamist sympathiser at the same time.

Other labels attached to him include racist, misogynist, regressive, antisemite and neo-Nazi. These stamps are applied by his opponents; in his own words, his positions and arguments are about moral clarity, disagreeable as they may well be to many people. Muslims in America must have the same rights as Christians, Mr. Carlson told a gathering of Christian conservatives last December. His humanist position sits uneasily with the textbook definition of any nationalism.

Mr. Carlson's critique of capitalism and corporate greed on the one hand, and his assertion of cultural and religious heritage on the other, is a combination that draws public support in many parts of the world. This politics defies the familiar definitions of left, right or centre.

Mr. Carlson had an unsentimental view of Mr. Trump. "Happy countries don't elect Donald Trump President. Desperate ones do. In retrospect, the lesson seemed obvious: ignore voters for long enough and you get Donald Trump," he wrote in his 2018 book *Ship of Fools*.

Would he himself run for the presidency? Mr. Carlson, whose name now appears among Republican probables for the 2028 election, was recently asked. He referred to his refusal to compromise on issues and his tendency to say things that others remain silent about as impediments to a political career, but did not rule out the possibility of taking an electoral turn. He went further, saying he would be happy to debate Ted Cruz – the Senator he questioned in an interview now viewed 39 million times – on a public platform at any time. Charges of antisemitism, Islamophobia and race supremacism against him rest primarily on Mr. Carlson's willingness to host people of all opinions. Nick Fuentes, an avowed white nationalist, appeared on Mr. Carlson's show. While finding common ground with Mr. Fuentes on the U.S. relationship with Israel, Mr. Carlson disagreed with any equation of the Israeli state with Jews, because, he said, it goes "against my Christian faith".

Born in 1969, in San Francisco, Mr. Carlson was raised by his father Dick Carlson, a reporter who became director of Voice of America and president of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. His mother, Lisa McNear, was an artist. His parents divorced when he was a child; he reportedly said he had not known his mother at all when she died. He had a wild side through school and college. After four years at Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut, he failed to graduate. He then tried to join the CIA; his application was denied. He turned to journalism.

The Israel factor

Mr. Carlson has framed a politics that many Americans across the spectrum find reasonable. In his own words: "Any economic system that weakens and destroys families is not worth having"; "Market capitalism is not a religion," and Republicans were "controlled by the banks".

What works him into real anger is the centrepiece of American foreign policy – unconditional support for Israel. "My real rage, what I am actually upset about, is directed toward my people, Protestant Christian, evangelical pastors who have made deals with the Israeli government, or have theology so deranged that they think their Christian faith requires them to support the murder of children, including Christian children." Conservatives are taking note. Kevin Roberts, president of the Heritage Foundation – the influential conservative think tank in Washington, DC – said "Christians can critique the state of Israel without being antisemitic", coming out in public support of Mr. Carlson. The debate has only just begun, and the spotlight is firmly on Mr. Carlson.

THE GIST

- Tucker Carlson was let go by Fox News in April 2023 — when his viewership was miles ahead of the competition. His primetime show on Fox had drawn 3.5 million viewers nightly. The day after his exit, the slot had 20% fewer viewers
- He launched his independent show on X in June 2023 — the debut episode was viewed approximately 120 million times
- Carlson has framed a politics that many Americans across the spectrum find reasonable. In his own words: "Any economic system that weakens and destroys families is not worth having; Market capitalism is not a religion," he once said

Asphyxiating an island nation

Blockade on Cuba

Donald Trump's illegal blockade on the island led to the collapse of the country's electricity grid last week; many are struggling with spoiled food and stifling heat

Srinivasan Ramani

AFP

Two ships moving through the Atlantic Ocean have caught the attention of maritime intelligence companies and geostrategists across the world. *The Anatoly Kolodkin*, owned by the Russian government and carrying an estimated 7,30,000 barrels of crude oil, is heading towards energy-starved Cuba in clear defiance of Donald Trump's illegal energy blockade of the socialist island-nation. Shipping tracker firm Kpler reported that the *Kolodkin* could reach Cuba as early as March 23.

It would not be the first tanker attempting to bring Russian fuel to Cuba in recent weeks. *The Sea Horse*, loaded with 2,00,000 barrels of gas oil believed to be from Russia but owned by a Chinese firm, was headed to Cuba before it abruptly halted in the middle of the Atlantic last month – likely fearing consequences from the U.S.. If the Russian ships arrive, they will be Cuba's first energy shipments in three months.

Russia's help would be a massive succour to a desperate Cuba. The country's entire electricity grid collapsed last week, leaving about 10 million people without power. Although the government managed to partially restore supply to parts of Havana, the consequences have been disastrous for ordinary Cubans. A report from the ground in Havana by *The Guardian* indicated that there are few cars on the roads, most airlines serving the island have suspended flights, the Canadian company Sherritt International has shuttered nickel mining operations in Cuba, state offices have closed, and schools have partly suspended classes. Many, the newspaper reported, are struggling with spoiled food, stifling heat, and sleepless children.

Cuba's dependence on oil is structural: it accounts for 83% of total power generation, while oil products make up 56% of total energy consumption by industry, transport, agriculture, and households.

None of this has deterred the Trump administration which continues to pursue illegal actions. On January 29, Mr. Trump signed an executive order threatening punitive tariffs on any country selling oil to Cuba. Last week, he went further, explicitly threatening to "take" the island. Cuba's fuel supplies had been highly dependent on Venezuelan oil under the oil-for-doctors scheme instituted by Hugo Chavez. In 2022, Venezuela supplied 75% of Cuba's oil imports; by 2023, this had dropped to 58% as Mexico emerged as a key supplier with 31%. Venezuela's supply fell from 46,500 barrels a day in December 2025 to zero following Nicolas Maduro's abduction in early January. After the January 29 order, Mexico also halted shipments.

Decades of coercion

The current crisis is also the culmination of six decades of U.S. economic coercion. What Cubans call the "blockade" began in 1962 following the Cuban Revolution and nationalisation of industries. The embargo was reinforced in 1992 by the Torricelli Act, which prohibited foreign subsidiaries of U.S. firms from trading with Cuba and barred ships that had docked in Cuba from entering U.S. ports for 180 days. The first Trump administration redesignated Cuba as a 'State Sponsor of Terrorism' in January 2021, days before leaving office.

Cuba recently admitted it was in discussions with Washington and appears willing to make some economic changes. *The New York Times* reported that U.S. negotiators were demanding the resignation of President Miguel Díaz-Canel.

Cuba has faced and overcome severe economic crises before. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, which provided subsidies averaging $4.3 billion annually, the island went through what it termed the 'Special Period' through the 1990s. GDP fell by 35% between 1989 and 1993 and Cubans faced severe food shortages. The government responded with partial liberalisation. More recently, it has permitted micro, small and medium enterprises. But these reforms have proved insufficient against the combined weight of the embargo and subsequent sanctions.

The Cuban government has remained defiant even as it negotiates. President Díaz-Canel responded that the U.S. government wants "to take over the country, its resources, its properties, and even the very economy they seek to suffocate in order to force us to surrender". He added: "Faced with the worst-case scenario, Cuba is guided by one certainty: any external aggressor will face unyielding resistance."

Same field, two fates

South Pars

An Israeli attack on a gas field straddling the Persian Gulf and Iran's counterstrikes have laid bare how fragile the world's energy security really is

V. Nivedita

AP

In a marked escalation of the West Asia conflict, Israel attacked Iran's South Pars gas field, the world's largest, shared with Qatar across the Persian Gulf, on March 18. Iran, in retaliation, launched missile attacks on energy facilities in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait and Israel.

The U.S. was quick to distance itself from the attack, with President Donald Trump saying that Israel acted alone and that Tel Aviv would not target the "extremely important and valuable" site again.

The war on Iran had already dealt a massive energy shock to the global economy by choking off exports of crude oil and LNG through the Strait of Hormuz. Brent crude rose 5% to $108.66 a barrel on March 18, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude rose 2.5% to $98.65 a barrel. Natural gas prices also shot up significantly. Beneath the Persian Gulf, straddling the maritime boundary between Iran and Qatar, lies a reservoir so vast it has become central to the energy economies of both countries and much of the world beyond.

Qatar's North Field and Iran's South Pars together contain more than 1,800 trillion cubic feet of usable gas, enough, according to a Reuters report, to supply the world's needs for 13 years. The field is shared by Iran and Qatar, giving both countries the second and third largest natural gas reserves in the world, behind Russia. The field was first discovered in Qatari waters in 1971. South Pars was discovered in 1990. The two countries then embarked on strikingly different journeys with the same resource.

Qatar built Ras Laffan Industrial City, a bustling metropolis 80 km north of Doha, to process the gas from this field. Today, Ras Laffan processes nearly all of the country's LNG and is responsible for approximately one fifth of the world's entire LNG supply. The revenues it generated transformed Qatar from a small Gulf emirate into one of the wealthiest countries on earth.

Iran's story takes a different turn. South Pars accounts for 70-75% of the Islamic Republic's total gas production. The gas heats homes, powers factories, and fuel industries. It is the backbone of the country's domestic energy supply.

U.S. sanctions, first imposed in the early 1980s, effectively shut Iran out of global energy markets. Mr. Trump withdrew from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal in 2018, during his first term, and reimposed tough sanctions on Tehran, leaving part of one of the world's richest gas reserves stranded behind a wall of geopolitical isolation.

India's ties

The escalation of the conflict into energy sites in the region is bad news for India. India's energy relationship with Iran has remained limited as sanctions, security and commercial concerns kept several ambitious projects from taking off. The two countries discussed a 1,036-km Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline, but New Delhi stepped back from talks in 2007.

In 2009, ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL) and the Hinduja Group signed agreements to pick up a stake in Phase 12 of the South Pars gas field, along with Petronet LNG. The Indian companies were to receive up to 6 million tonnes of liquefied gas annually. OVL, along with Indian Oil Corporation and Oil India, also had plans to invest $5-5.5 billion in developing the Farzad-B gas field. None of these projects took off.

India, which imports nearly 80% of its crude oil needs, is heavily dependent on Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait and the UAE. It also imports 60% of its LPG needs and around 50% of its natural gas requirements.

"Forty-seven percent of our LNG imports are from Qatar, [therefore], any impact there or anything which affects supplies in the Middle East [West Asia] would impact us," Sujata Sharma, Joint-Secretary at the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas told reporters on March 19. New Delhi is procuring LNG from alternative suppliers, but those supplies will take time to arrive and are likely to be more expensive.

Iranian attacks have knocked out 17% of Qatar's LNG export capacity, causing an estimated $20 billion in lost annual revenue and threatening supplies to Europe and Asia. Even if the war ends tomorrow, it could take years before production is normalised. This means that availability would be reduced, and the prices are elevated.

In LNG markets, where there are limited strategic reserves and supply chains stretch across conflict zones, even short-term disruptions can have outsized consequences.

JERUSALEM

'Trump's Board of Peace hands Hamas disarmament proposal'

AFP

Donald Trump's Board of Peace has presented Hamas with a written proposal on how it could lay down its weapons, two sources said, a step the Palestinian militants have thus far refused to take. The proposal was submitted to Hamas during meetings in Cairo over the past week, one of the sources said. REUTERS

MOSCOW

Ukraine launches more than 280 drones at Russia, says Moscow

REUTERS

Ukraine launched more than 280 drones at Russia overnight, one of Kyiv's largest barrages since the start of the war, Russia's state news agency reported, citing the Defence Ministry. State news agency *Tass* reported that 283 drones in total had been intercepted, according to Russia's Defence Ministry. AFP

BAGHDAD

Drone attack against Iraqi intel services kills one in Baghdad

REUTERS

An Iraqi officer was killed on Saturday in a drone attack targeting an Iraqi intelligence services building in a residential Baghdad neighbourhood, the agency said. Iraqi intelligence agency condemned the strike as a "terrorist attack carried out by rogue elements". No group immediately claimed responsibility. AFP

WASHINGTON

Cuba refuses to let U.S. Embassy in Havana import fuel for generators

AFP

The Cuban government has refused a request by the U.S. Embassy in Havana to allow it to import diesel for its generators while the Trump administration continues to impose a fuel blockade on the island. The island is relying on its own natural gas, solar power and its own oil to run thermoelectric plants. AP

Iran targets Israel's town housing nuclear facility after Natanz strike

Shrapnel wounds 20 in Dimona, home to Israel's nuclear facility; IAEA chief Grossi calls for 'military restraint' to avoid any risk of a nuclear accident; U.S. military used 5,000-pound bunker-buster bombs 'to destroy an underground Iranian facility'

Agence France-Presse
JERUSALEM/TEHRAN

Israeli medics late on Saturday said shrapnel wounded 20 people in the town of Dimona, home to a nuclear facility, after warnings of incoming missile fire from Iran.

Israeli police released pictures of officers in a building with a large hole blown in the wall.

Dimona in southern Israel hosts a facility widely believed to possess the West Asia's sole, if undeclared, nuclear arsenal.

Israel has maintained a policy of ambiguity about its nuclear programme, and the Dimona plant officially focuses on research.

Massive damage: The rubble of a building that was destroyed by a strike in Tehran, Iran on Saturday. REUTERS

According to Iran's atomic energy organisation, the U.S. and Israel targeted a plant at Natanz in Isfahan province, which hosts underground centrifuges to enrich uranium for Iran's disputed nuclear programme and was already damaged in last year's June war. The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Rafael Grossi, called for "military restraint to avoid any risk of a nuclear accident", but the UN watchdog confirmed that no increase in off-site radiation levels had been reported.

Asked about Natanz, the Israeli military said it was "not aware of a strike".

The Israeli military earlier in the day said its forces struck ballistic missile production facilities belonging to Iran's Revolutionary Guards and a separate compound belonging to Iran's Defence Ministry in overnight attacks on Tehran.

"Facilities utilised for the production of critical components for the development of ballistic missiles belonging to the Iranian regime's security apparatus were targeted," the military said.

The U.S. military declared on Saturday it had taken out an Iranian bunker housing weapons threatening oil and gas shipments in the Strait of Hormuz.

Admiral Brad Cooper, head of U.S. Central Command, said U.S. war planes had dropped 5,000-pound bombs on an underground facility on Iran's coast that was storing anti-ship cruise missiles, mobile launchers and other equipment.

"We not only took out the facility, but also destroyed intelligence support sites and missile radar relays that were used to monitor ship movements," Adm. Cooper said in a video statement, revealing details of a strike first announced on Tuesday.

U.K. slams Iran's missile attack at Diego Garcia base

Associated Press
DUBAI

Britain has condemned "Iran's reckless attacks" after its military fired missiles at the U.K.-U.S. air base on the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.

U.K. officials have not given details of the attempted strike, which was unsuccessful. It's unclear how close the missiles came to the base, which is about 4,000 km from Iran.

The Ministry of Defence said on Saturday that Iran's "lashing out across the region and holding hostage the Strait of Hormuz, are a threat to British interests and British allies".

Britain has not participated in U.S.-Israeli attacks on Iran, but has allowed American bombers to use U.K. bases to attack Iran's missile sites.

Long shot: An overview of the Diego Garcia military base on the Chagos Archipelago in the Indian Ocean. AFP

On Friday, the British government said U.S. bombers can also use U.K. bases, including Diego Garcia, in operations to prevent Iran attacking ships in the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran targeted the base before that U.K. statement.

Meanwhile, a U.K. official source said Iran was "unsuccessful" in targeting the base at Diego Garcia.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported on Friday, citing U.S. officials, that while neither of the two ballistic missiles hit their target, the launch suggests that Tehran has missiles with longer ranges than previously thought.

Iran has "always had missiles of that sort of range that we've known about, maybe not declared", former U.K. Royal Navy commander Tom Sharpe said.

Former FBI director Robert Mueller, who probed Trump, dies

Associated Press
WASHINGTON

Robert S. Mueller III, the FBI director who transformed the nation's premier law enforcement agency into a terrorism-fighting force after the September 11, 2001, attacks and who later became special counsel in charge of investigating ties between Russia and Donald Trump's presidential campaign, has died. He was 81.

"With deep sadness, we are sharing the news that Bob passed away" on Friday night, his family said in a statement on Saturday. "His family asks that their privacy be respected."

At the FBI, Mueller set about almost immediately overhauling the bureau's mission to meet the law enforcement needs of the 21st century, beginning his 12-year tenure just one week before the September 11 attacks and serving across presidents of both political parties. He was nominated by Republican President George W. Bush.

The cataclysmic event instantaneously switched the bureau's top priority from solving domestic crime to preventing terrorism, a shift that imposed an almost impossibly difficult standard on Mueller and the rest of the federal government: preventing 99 out of 100 terrorist plots wasn't good enough.

Art of birding

Patient wait: Plane spotters take pictures outside of the RAF Fairford airbase, used by United States Air Force (USAF) personnel, amid the U.S.-Israeli conflict with Iran, in Fairford, Gloucestershire, Britain, on Saturday. REUTERS

Bangladesh rushes to secure $2 bn loan amid energy crisis

Agence France-Presse
DHAKA

Bangladesh is pushing to secure loans of around $2 billion from multilateral agencies for tackling energy security concerns amid soaring global fuel prices driven by the West Asia war.

The government has already taken several measures to curb fuel consumption, including halting production at most fertilizer factories.

The government has now adopted a three-pronged approach to ensure sustainable energy supply, the Prime Minister's finance and planning adviser Rashed Al Titumir said on Saturday.

"Part of that is securing loans," Mr. Titumir said.

Rashed Al Titumir

Early disbursement

"The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has committed $1.3 billion, while the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has pledged $500 million as Budget support," he said, adding the government was pursuing the loans for early disbursement.

The government may also approach the World Bank. "As we want to keep foreign currency reserves intact, we have limited options other than seeking loans," Mr. Titumir added.

Bangladesh – which imports 95% of its oil and gas needs – has not raised electricity and fuel prices despite the global surge.

Most crude fuel is sourced from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, while around 35% of gas supply also comes from the West Asia.

Since the outbreak of the war, authorities have taken several measures to curb fuel consumption.

These include setting limits on fuel purchases, halting production at most fertilizer factories, deploying police to patrol filling stations, and using the navy to escort LNG shipments.

Sri Lanka eyes Trincomalee project to ease energy woes

Meera Srinivasan
COLOMBO

Redeveloping the Second World War-era oil tank farms in Sri Lanka's eastern Trincomalee district is the "permanent solution" to the energy crisis, Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath said, adding that the government was taking steps to expedite the project backed by India and the United Arab Emirates.

"Temporary solutions are not sustainable, we need a long-term strategy to deal with oil storage and distribution given the global energy situation," Mr. Herath told *The Hindu* on Saturday, reiterating his recent Parliament address. "That is why at the very beginning, our government signed the MoU with India and the UAE.," he said, referring to the Memorandum of Agreement signed by the three parties in April 2025, during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the island nation, to develop Trincomalee as an energy hub.

The move drew attention as one of the first major MoUs on strategic projects, signed by the Anura Kumara Dissanayake administration after its big win in the November 2025 general elections. The move is widely perceived as a big shift, since the leftist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), the main constituent of the ruling National People's Power, had long opposed Indian involvement in the project.

Severe shortage: A sign reading 'Closed' is displayed at a Lanka IOC fuel station in Kotahena on the outskirts of Colombo. AFP

After the signing of the MoU nearly a year ago, the three parties have met once, and Sri Lanka has put forward a concept note for the other two partners to respond to, sources familiar with the discussions said. "There are some technical aspects being addressed by the Energy Ministry. Once that is done, a tender process will be initiated to bring in investors," Mr. Herath said, adding that the government was working to "expedite the process".

For over four decades now, since the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987, New Delhi has been negotiating the redevelopment of the strategically located oil tank farms with various governments in Colombo. However, the project has seen little progress beyond initial agreements. However, the current energy crisis, which threatens to severely disrupt global supply chains and economies, has put the once-contested project back in the spotlight.

Although Sri Lanka does not import fuel through the Strait of Hormuz – its sources are India, Malaysia, South Korea and Singapore – the closure of the strait impacted global supply, Minister Herath told Parliament last week.

"When a situation like this erupts...the entire country must face the ramifications. We are facing that same situation today," he said, while speaking on Sri Lanka's response to the crisis in West Asia, including Colombo's refusal to entertain requests from both the United States – ground access to its war planes – and Iran, which sought port calls for its vessels.

Amid escalation in the war in West Asia, following the United States and Israel's attack on Iran, and its retaliation, Sri Lanka switched to a digital QR code-based system to ration fuel sales last week, in what authorities called a "precautionary measure".

കേരള ഗ്രാമീണ ബാങ്ക്
KERALA GRAMEENA BANK
Scheduled Bank Owned By Government
കേരളത്തിന്റെ സ്വന്തം ബാങ്ക്

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

Kerala Grameena Bank invites Expression Of Interest from eligible and experienced Project Management Consultancy (PMC) firms for providing end-to-end consultancy services for the proposed Administrative Office Building in central Kerala. Interested firms may download the detailed EOI document from the bank's website. Further details and terms & conditions are available on the Bank's website, **www.kgb.bank.in.** The Bank reserves the right to accept or reject any application without assigning any reason.

The last date for submission: 10.04.2026 at 05.00 pm.

Date : 19.03.2026
Place : Malappuram

Assistant General Manager, General Administration Wing,
Kerala Grameena Bank, Head Office, Malappuram
Phn Num: 9400999015, 9400999066

WISE WORDS

It is only going to get tougher: Kohli's pep talk to RCB teammates

K. MURALI KUMAR

Virat Kohli urged his RCB teammates to stay switched on and not waste their days while training as the side prepares to successfully defend its IPL title. "We worked really hard to achieve what we did last year, and it is only going to get tougher because other teams are going to come hard at us," said Kohli during a pep talk.

ANOTHER BLOW

KKR medium-pacer Akash Deep ruled out of the upcoming season

FILE PHOTO: SANDEEP SAXENA

KKR has suffered another setback as medium-pacer Akash Deep has been ruled out of the IPL season with an injury. He is yet to recover from a lower-back stress issue. KKR will also be without Harshit Rana and awaits the arrival of Matheesha Pathirana, who is yet to receive clearance from Sri Lanka Cricket.

NEW ASSIGNMENT

World champion India to play two T20Is in Ireland in June

FILE PHOTO: EMMANUAL YOGINI

Reigning World champion India will play two T20 Internationals in Ireland on June 26 and June 28, respectively, the BCCI said on Saturday about the games that will precede the white-ball assignment in England. The matches will take place in Belfast, where the Indian team will play for the first time since 2007.

BIG MOVE

Wimbledon to use Video Review Technology for first time this year

AP

Wimbledon will use Video Review Technology for the first time during this year's tournament, the All England Club announced on Saturday. The oldest Grand Slam tennis tournament will have the technology available on Centre Court, No. 1 Court — the club's second-biggest stadium — and four other show courts.

Royals enter the post-Samson era with optimism

The young batters should fire in unison to ensure the former captain's absence isn't felt; skipper Parag has a tough job on his hands; the addition of Jadeja and Bishnoi bolsters the spin department

P.K. Ajith Kumar

If you are a Rajasthan Royals fan, you are allowed a cry or two in anguish.

Firstly you see your best player and captain leave Jaipur after lighting up the Sawai Mansingh Stadium for over a decade with his gorgeous strokeplay. He then goes on to win India the T20 World Cup. Sanju Samson is the man of the moment in Indian cricket, but he has traded pink for yellow.

Later, you hear that one of the two men who Royals traded from Chennai Super Kings in exchange of Samson is out of the IPL because of an injury. Sam Curran is no Samson but he would have been an all-rounder who Royals needed. Alongside the other man involved in the deal – Ravindra Jadeja – the Englishman was expected to provide more balance to the team. Now Kumar Sangakkara, back as the head coach, has got some rethinking to do.

But there is still plenty of quality in the Royals squad. Let us begin with the beginners. In Yashasvi Jaiswal and Vaibhav Suryavanshi, the Rajasthan outfit has one of the most explosive opening combinations in the league. And there is beauty in their assault. The two lefties can put not only the Royals innings on the right track but also its entire campaign.

Targeting a purple patch: The Royals players put in the hard yards in the pre-season camp. PTI

Jaiswal has already proved himself as a brilliant all-format batter, while Suryavanshi is the boy wonder who promises impossible possibilities. The 14-year-old's 35-ball century against Gujarat Titans last season will remain one of the greatest knocks in the league.

There is, of course, a lot more to the Royals batting unit than the dashing opening duo. Newly-appointed captain Riyan Parag, on whom Royals kept faith even when he was struggling for a few years, Dhruv Jurel, Shimron Hetmyer, the South African pair of Donovan Ferreira and Lhuan-dre Pretorius and Shubham Dubey offer plenty of firepower.

Jadeja, who was part of the Royals team that emerged champion in the inaugural season in 2008, provides further batting depth, but more is expected from his left-arm spin. The other main slow bowler is Ravi Bishnoi, the franchise's biggest buy at the mini auction. The pace department looks good with the likes of Jofra Archer, Nandre Burger, Adam Milne, Tushar Deshpande and Sandeep Sharma in it.

If you are a Royals fan, you can hope for a much better season than the last one – where the team finished ninth – and more.

IPL-19 COUNTDOWN

Rajasthan Royals

CHAMPION: 2008

OVERALL NUMBERS

Matches	236
Won	116
Lost	117
NR	3

BY OPPONENT

TEAM	M	W	L	NR
CSK	31	15	16	0
DC	30	15	15	0
GT	8	2	6	0
KKR	31	14	16	1
LSG	6	4	2	0
MI	30	14	16	0
PBKS	30	17	13	0
RCB	33	14	17	2
SRH	21	9	12	0

Royals' remaining matches were against Deccan Chargers (9), PWI (5) and KTK (2)

RR'S 2026 LEAGUE CAMPAIGN*

March 30	vs. CSK	Guwahati	7.30 p.m.
April 4	vs. GT	Ahmedabad	7.30 p.m.
April 7	vs. MI	Guwahati	7.30 p.m.
April 10	vs. RCB	Guwahati	7.30 p.m.

*announced so far

THE SQUAD

Riyan Parag (Capt.), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Vaibhav Suryavanshi, Shimron Hetmyer, Dhruv Jurel, Lhuan-Dre Pretorius, Donovan Ferreira, Ravindra Jadeja, Shubham Dubey, Aman Rao, Ravi Singh, Jofra Archer, Adam Milne, Nandre Burger, Sandeep Sharma, Kwena Maphaka, Tushar Deshpande, Kuldeep Sen, Yudhvir Singh, Sushant Mishra, Brijesh Sharma, Ravi Bishnoi, Vignesh Puthur, Yash Raj Punja.

MIRACLE MAN

Vaibhav Suryavanshi

Mark Butcher has compared him to the legendary Garry Sobers when it comes to bat swing. Vaibhav Suryavanshi is one batter who can swing the fortunes of his team with sheer audacity and the speed with which he scores. Rajasthan Royals has been smart – and lucky -- to sign up cricket's most exciting prodigy since Sachin Tendulkar.

COMPILED BY **G. PRASAD & P.K. AJITH KUMAR**

Pulling through: Abhay passed a tough test against Ameeshenraj.

Abhay, Veer in final; Anahat meets Moataz

INDIAN OPEN

Sports Bureau
MUMBAI

It will be an all-Indian final in the men's section of the JSW Indian Open after Abhay Singh and Veer Chotrani registered hard-fought wins in the semifinals on Saturday. Top seed Anahat Singh and second seed Hana Moataz will battle it out in the women's summit clash.

Second seed Abhay overcame a strong challenge from Malaysia's Ameeshenraj Chandaran to prevail 11-9, 9-11, 11-3, 11-8. The Indian raced to a 9-4 lead in the opening game, but the Malaysian reeled off five consecutive points. However, Abhay maintained his composure to win 11-9.

The second game was evenly poised. Trailing 8-9, Ameeshenraj clinched three straight points to take the game and pull level. Abhay came up with an emphatic response in the third, cruising to an 11-3 win. It was a tough battle in the fourth game as Abhay trailed 2-6 before fighting back to make it 7-7. He eventually closed out the contest 11-8.

Veer, after dominating the first two games, suffered a blip in the third before hauling himself back in the fourth.

Anahat took the opening game against Tanvi before the latter fought back to level the tie with a 11-9 win in the second. The third game was a gripping affair before Anahat won 11-8. And she was in cruise mode in the fourth, powering home 11-2.

Moataz overcame Nadien Elhammamy 11-8, 5-11, 11-5, 11-7 in an all-Egyptian semifinal.

The results (semifinals):
Women: Anahat Singh bt Tanvi Khanna 11-6, 9-11, 11-8, 11-2; Hana Moataz (Egy) bt Nadien Elhammamy (Egy) 11-8, 5-11, 11-5, 11-7. **Men:** Abhay Singh bt Ameeshenraj Chandaran (Mas) 11-9, 9-11, 11-3, 11-8; Veer Chotrani bt Sanjay Jeeva (Mas) 11-7, 11-5, 5-11, 11-6.

'Want Bihar to emerge as a major contributor to India's medal haul'

Presents
SPORTSTAR SPORTS CONCLAVE
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Sports Bureau

The *Sportstar* Sports Conclave caravan returns to Patna for Focus Bihar which will be held at the Taj City Centre here on Sunday.

Samrat Choudhary, Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar, will deliver the opening address while Raksha Khadse, Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, will give the keynote speech. Shreyasi Singh, Minister of Sports and I&T, Government of Bihar and Commonwealth Games gold medallist, will inaugurate the event.

"Sports is an important driver of growth for Bihar. The drive for us has not only been to use sport as an economic tool but also build frameworks where Bihar can emerge as a major contributor to India's medal haul across disciplines.

"Today (Saturday) our athlete Piyush Raj won gold in 400m at the India Open athletics championship in Thiruvananthapuram and qualified for the Asia Cup and U-20 World athletics championships.

"Over the past few years, Bihar has stepped up as a sporting venue, with fields as diverse as hockey, rugby and sepak takraw finding a home. We hope to build on our progress and use sport to put Bihar in the fast lane of development," Shreyasi said.

Olympic gold medallist Abhinav Bindra will dive deep into the impact of India's bid to host the 2036 Games while a special address by 2001 All England badminton champion P. Gopi Chand will explore the pressing question: 'Can sports and education go hand in hand?'

A host of speakers, including World Athletics vice-president Adille Sumariwalla and AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey, will discuss issues pertaining to governance in the sporting ecosystem.

The *Sportstar's* Focus Bihar Conclave is presented by the Bihar Sports Authority and Department of Sports, Government of Bihar. IndianOil Corporation Limited is associate sponsor and State Bank of India the banking partner.

Welbeck's brace engineers Brighton's win over Liverpool; Bournemouth holds United

EURO LEAGUES

Agencies
BRIGHTON

Danny Welbeck scored a brace as Brighton defeated Liverpool 2-1 in the Premier League on Saturday, dealing a blow to the Reds' push for a Champions League spot next season.

A goal in each half from Welbeck handed Brighton its fourth win in five PL matches, keeping alive its own hopes of European football next season. Liverpool were missing both goalkeeper Alisson Becker and forward Mohamed Salah at the Amex Stadium.

On Friday, Manchester United's charge towards the Champions League stalled after it blowed the lead twice to draw 2-2 at Bournemouth. Michael Carrick has lost just once in his 10 games since taking charge , but his team was left hanging on for a point after Harry Maguire's late red card.

The results: Premier League: Brighton 2 (Welbeck 14, 56) bt Liverpool 1 (Kerkez 30).
Bundesliga: Bayern Munich 4 (Olise 43, Gnabry 45+1, 67, Kane 49) bt Union Berlin 0; Heidenheim 3 (Behrens 56, Pieringer 72-pen, 85) drew with Bayer Leverkusen 3 (Tillman 22, Schick 35, 79).
On Friday: Premier League: Bournemouth 2 (Christie 67, Kroupi 81-pen) drew with Manchester United 2 (Fernandes 61-pen, Hill 71-og).
La Liga: Villarreal 3 (Gerard 7, Mikautadze 15, Pepe 23) bt Real Sociedad 1 (Sucic 47).
Serie A: Cagliari 0 lost to Napoli 1 (McTominay 2).
Bundesliga: Leipzig 5 (Gruda 17, 44, Baumgartner 21, 30, Henrichs 78) bt Hoffenheim 0.

First-half blitz helps Punjab FC drub Kerala Blasters

ISL

M.R. Praveen Chandran
KOCHI

Kerala Blasters FC plunged to a new low at home on Saturday, losing 1-3 to Punjab FC in the ISL match at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here.

Punjab killed the contest in the first half with three goals and wiped out any hopes of a revival, which Blasters had nurtured before the clash.

A disorganised defence coupled with fundamental errors in passing gifted goals to the visiting side. Though Blasters came up with an improved show in the second period, it couldn't cover the ground it yielded to Punjab earlier in the game.

Punjab raced ahead with the first chance it created. A long ball from Khaimin Lhungdim landed in the path of Samir Zeljkovic, who slotted home with a first-time effort in the seventh minute.

Blasters had the first look at the rival goal in the 14th minute when Naocha Singh fizzed a shot over from the top of the box.

The host conceded again in the 18th minute after defender Ruivah Hormipam mistakenly laid the ball to Zeljkovic, who sent Bede Osuji clear with a through pass.

The fate of the match was sealed in the 38th minute when a long-ranger from Manglenthang Kipgen bounced off the bar for an unmarked Dani Ramirez to nod in.

In the second half, Blasters showed some incisiveness upfront, troubling the Punjab defence with coordinated moves.

Fallou Ndiaye reduced the margin in the 65th minute, heading in a cross from Jai Quitongo, but the visitor did enough thereafter to earn three points.

The result: Kerala Blasters FC 1 (Fallou Ndiaye 65) lost to Punjab FC 3 (Samir Zeljkovic 7, Bede Osuji 18, Dani Ramirez 38).

Clinical: Osuji finds the back of the net for Punjab. R. K. NITHIN

INBRIEF

Hamano secures Japan its third Women's Asian Cup title

Maika Hamano scored the only goal as a formidable Japan battled past Australia to clinch a third Women's Asian Cup title in Sydney on Saturday. The Tottenham star hit a stunning long-range strike in the 17th minute to add to Japan's continental crowns from 2014 and 2018.

Tanvi's Orleans campaign ends with semifinal loss

India's teen shuttler Tanvi Sharma went down 9-21, 16-21 in 35 minutes against former World champion Nozomi Okuhara in the semifinals of the Orleans Masters Super 300 tournament in Orleans (France) on Saturday.

McEvoy breaks men's 50m freestyle World record

Cameron McEvoy broke the men's 50m freestyle World record, which had stood for 17 years. The 31-year-old Australian clocked 20.88s on Friday at the China Open in Shenzhen, taking 0.03s off Brazilian Cesar Cielo's previous mark of 20.91.

LIVE TELECAST

New Zealand vs South Africa: 4th T20I, Sony Sports Ten 1 & LIV, 11.45 a.m.
ISL: Sony Sports Ten 2 & FanCode, 5 & 7.30 p.m.
Serie A: DAZN, 5, 7.30, 10.30 p.m. & 1.15 a.m. (Monday)
Premier League: SS Select 1 & JioHotstar, 5.30 & 7.45 p.m.
LaLiga: FanCode, 6.30, 8.45, 11 p.m. & 1.30 a.m. (Monday)
Squash: Indian Open (finals), FanCode, 7 p.m.
Bundesliga: Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 8, 10 p.m. & 12 a.m. (Monday)

Manav, Yashaswini win maiden National titles

The men's top seed ends Jeet's impressive run in the summit clash to land the big prize; the 16-year-old Syndrela falters in a gripping all-PSPB women's finale

TABLE TENNIS

Amol Karhadkar
INDORE

Winning feeling: Yashaswini and Manav came up trumps in their respective finals. AMOL KARHADKAR

Manav Thakkar and Yashaswini Ghorpade, both representing the Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB), clinched their maiden men's and women's singles titles at the 87th Senior National Table Tennis Championship here on Saturday.

Even before the finals began at the Abhay Prashal Indoor Stadium, it was clear that new national champions would be crowned in both categories. Top seed Manav lived up to expectations, halting 15th seed Jeet Chandra's impressive run in the men's singles final with a 11-2, 11-4, 6-11, 11-9, 11-3 win. Moments earlier, eighth seed Yashaswini edged past third seed Syndrela Das in a gripping all-PSPB women's final that went the distance.

Manav's consistency proved too much for Jeet in a contest between two bespectacled paddlers. Though Jeet produced some audacious winners in the third game, Manav maintained control throughout the 35-minute encounter to cross the line without any fuss. After losing his only previous National Championship final seven years ago, Manav, the World No. 33, gave a high-five to his sparring partner Siddhesh Pande for ending his long wait.

The women's final, in contrast, was one of fluctuating fortunes. Yashaswini relied on her control, particularly with her long-pimpled backhand, while 16-year-old Syndrela showcased her attacking prowess with powerful backhand winners, repeatedly staging comebacks.

Decisive moment

At 8-8 in the deciding seventh game, Yashaswini pivoted to her forehand to produce a crucial winner – a moment that proved decisive. The Bengaluru paddler went on to seal a gruelling 75-minute match and celebrated in style with a Ben Shelton-inspired gesture for the second consecutive day.

Earlier, Syndrela had upset defending champion Diya Chitale in a tense semifinal, while Yashaswini progressed comfortably past Suhana Saini.

Along with the trophies and medals, both Manav and Yashaswini received prize money of ₹3.52 lakh each, while runners-up Jeet and Syndrela earned ₹1.76 lakh apiece.

The results: Men's singles (final): Manav Thakkar (PSPB) bt Jeet Chandra (RSPB) 11-2, 11-4, 6-11, 11-9, 11-3.

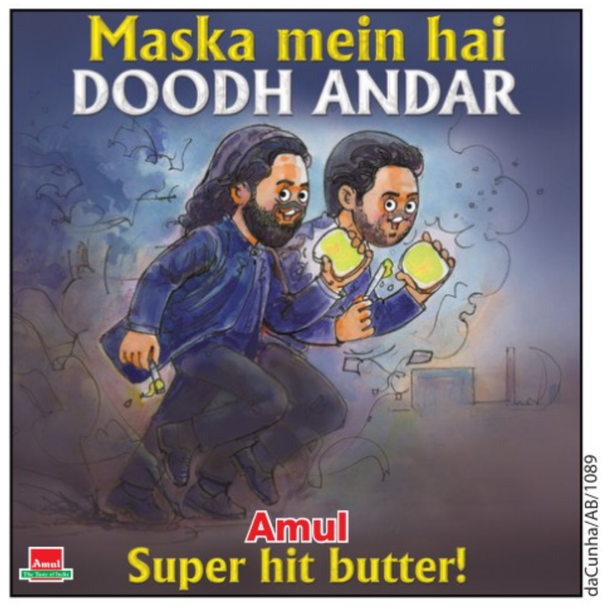
Semifinals: Manav bt Harmeet Desai (PSPB) 11-8, 11-5, 11-7, 11-6; Jeet bt Ronit Bhanja (RSPB) 11-8, 11-5, 8-11, 11-4, 7-11, 7-11, 11-7.

Women's singles (final): Yashaswini Ghoropde (PSPB) bt Syndrela Das (PSPB) 11-6, 12-14, 11-5, 9-11, 13-11, 6-11, 11-8.

Semifinals: Yashaswini bt Suhana Saini (Har) 6-11, 11-5, 11-9, 11-8, 11-3; Syndrela bt Diya Chitale (RBI) 7-11, 11-9, 11-7, 11-9, 3-11, 3-11, 13-11.

Mixed doubles (final): Ankur Bhattacharjee (WB) & Suhana Saini (Har) bt Aniket Bose & Sampriti Roy (WB) 11-9, 11-7, 9-11, 13-15, 12-10.

Semifinals: Aniket & Sampriti bt Ronit Bhanja & Kaushani Nath (RSPB) 7-11, 11-9, 12-10, 8-11, 11-7; Ankur & Suhana bt Akash Pal & Poymantee Baisya (RSPB) 11-4, 8-11, 11-7, 8-11, 11-9.



Yashaswini's birthday gift for long-time coach

Amol Karhadkar
INDORE

Moments after being crowned the new National table tennis champion, Yashaswini Ghorpade embraced her long-time coach and mentor, Anshuman Roy, who has guided her since she first picked up a racquet 15 years ago. Anshuman leaned in and whispered, "Thank you for the best birthday gift."

It was only then that Yashaswini realised she had completely forgotten her coach's birthday while keeping her focus on the tournament.

"Actually, I had forgotten about his birthday. It's really, really bad because I don't remember dates and days when I am competing in a tournament. So I did apologise to him, but we will make it up by having a party," the 21-year-old told *The Hindu* on Saturday.

Anshuman, however, had no complaints. "I honestly couldn't have asked for a better birthday gift than Yashu becoming the National champion for the first time," he said. "She has made it a memorable birthday for my lifetime."

Just before the embrace, Yashaswini stood tall and pointed her right index finger to the sky, recreating tennis star Ben Shelton's trademark celebration.

Beyond visualising herself lifting the trophy, she had been waiting nearly two years to replicate that celebration – and managed to do it for the second successive day, having first unveiled it after her quarterfinal win over top seed Sreeja Akula.

"That celebration was inspired by Shelton, of course. He is an icon from the tennis world, so I was really thinking about doing this after a very big win," Yashaswini said. "I think I have to come up with one more celebration of my own and not copy others.

Piyush and Sahil hog the limelight

INDIAN OPEN 400M

Sports Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

In the final, Piyush came up with a dizzying run at the second curve and motored past Sahil to finish first

As a majority of the athletes struggled to overcome the early season blues, Piyush Raj (Bihar) and Sahil Malik (Uttarakhand) came up with sizzling performances in the boys under-20 category in the Indian Open 400m meet at the LNCPE Athletics stadium on Saturday.

Piyush (47.11s) and Sahil (47.28s) came first and second respectively and punched their tickets to the World Under-20 athletics championships by coming under the qualifying mark of 47.40s.

Piyush reserved his energy for the final after finishing the qualifying race with a modest timing of 48.23.

However, in the final, he came up with a dizzying run at the second curve and motored past Sahil to finish first.

Tamil Nadu's Rajesh Ramesh came up with a strong kick in the final 100 metres to overcome a spirited challenge from T.S. Manu (NCOE) to win the men's 400m in 45.26s. Manu clocked 45.96 for silver while Amoj Jacob, who won race C, came third in 45.99.

The women's 400m was weakened by the pull-outs of national campers Jyothika Sri, Hima Das and Manisha Kumari.

However, R. Vithya Ramraj, who had the best timing in the heats, came up with a good run in the home stretch to win in 53.31s. G.K. Vijayakumari and Poovama Raju finished second and third respectively.

The results: Men: 1. Rajesh Ramesh (TN) (45.26s), 2. T.S. Manu (NCOE) (45.96), 3. Amoj Jacob (Delhi) (45.99).

Boys: Under-20: 1. Piyush Raj (Bihar) (47.11), 2. Sahil Malik (Uttarakhand) (47.28), 3. Edvin Mathew (Kerala) (47.65).

Under-18: 1. Sayeed Sabeer (Karnataka) (47.73), 2. Thanish Vijay Gaddam (NCOE) (48.31).

Women: 1. R. Vithya Ramraj (TN) (53.31), 2. G.K. Vijayakumari (Karnataka) (53.55), 3. Poovamma Raju (ONGC) (53.61),

Girls: Under-20: 1. Reshma (UP) (54.84), 2. Isha Rajesh Jadhav (Maharashtra) (55.46), 3. A. Dharani (TN) (55.63).

Under-18: 1. Kashish Bhagat (Maharashtra) (56.46), 2. M. Nethra (TN) (59.54), 3. Ashaben Chaudhary (Gujarat) (59.62).

Bengaluru FC hopes to stay within touching distance of the toppers

ISL

Sports Bureau

Bengaluru FC will be keen to stay within touching distance of the table-toppers when it faces host Inter Kashi FC at the Kishore Bharati Krirangan in Kolkata on Sunday.

BFC has earned eight points from five matches, six points less than leader Mumbai City FC which has played a match more, while debutant Inter Kashi has five points from as many games. Although the Renedy Singh-coached Bengaluru team dropped points in its goalless draw against Mohun Bagan Super Giant last week, it will take confidence from the fact that it halted the Kolkata giant's winning run.

But the chief coach is aware of the threat that Inter Kashi possesses. "I expect Inter Kashi to come all out at us. They gave a tough fight to FC Goa and Mumbai City FC. But we have prepared well and we will be ready," said Renedy in the pre-match interaction.

His counterpart Antonio Lopez Habas, no stranger to the ISL, will not be present on the touchline after receiving a red card against Mumbai City. Habas' absence may make the challenge tougher as Kashi is hoping to return to winning ways after back-to-back defeats (against MCFC and Jamshedpur FC).

But the Bengaluru players and staff are not spilling a lot of ink on it. Speaking about how he is preparing for the games ahead, BFC defender Ricky Meetei said: "The next match will also be tough, but when the coach needs me, I am ready to step up and play for the team."

Central figure: Bengaluru can bank on Chhetri's experience in crunch moments. BENGALURU FC